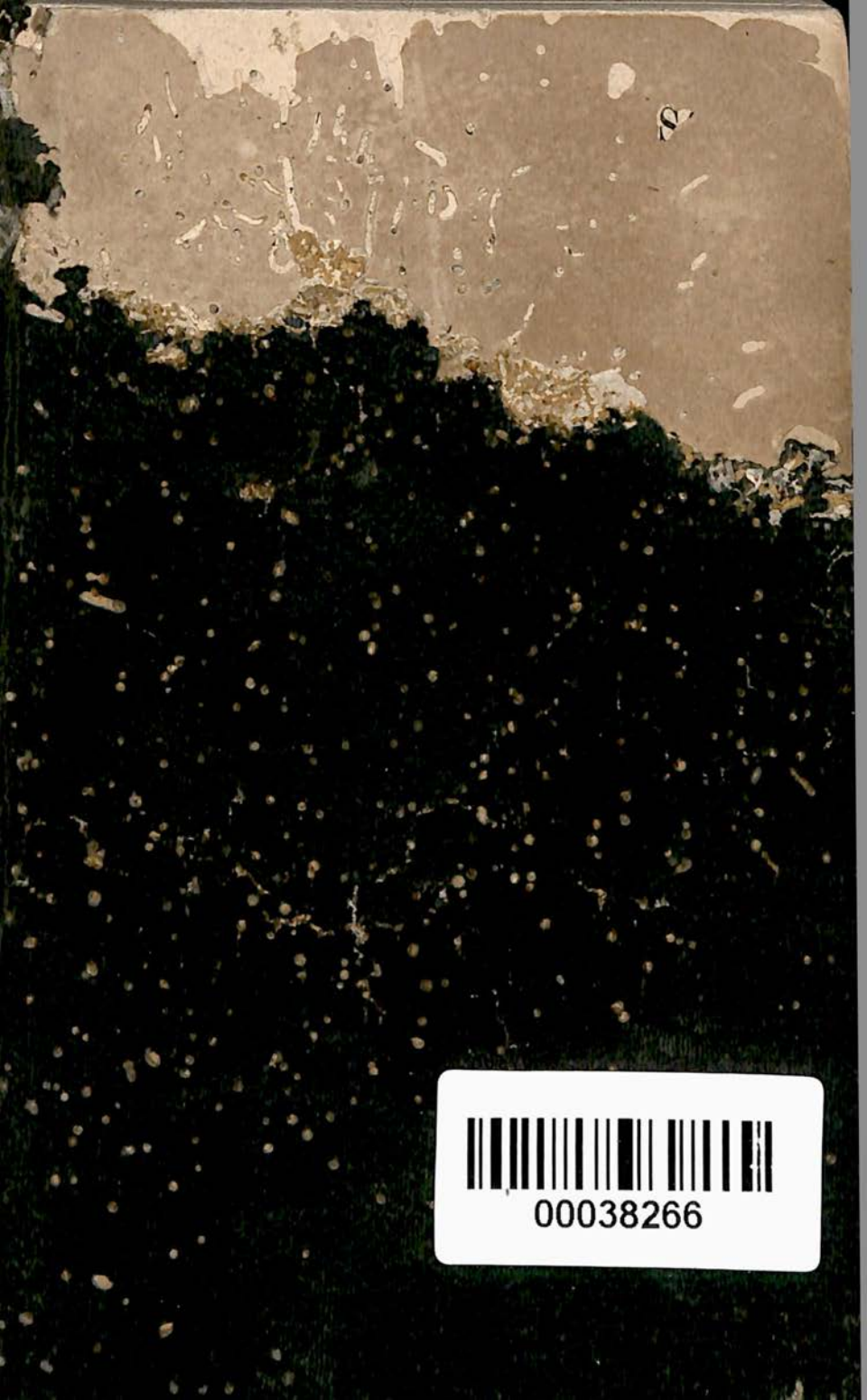
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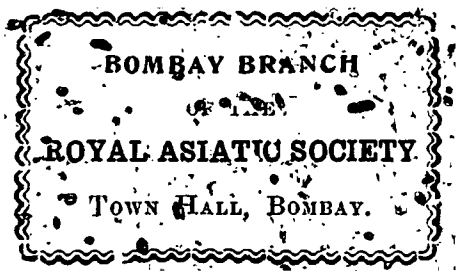

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FIVE YEARS IN DAMASCUS:

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT

ON THE

HISTORY, TOPOGRAPHY, AND ANTIQUITIES OF THAT CITY.

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WITH

TRAVELS AND RESEARCHES IN PALMYRA, LEBANON, AND THE HAURAN.

By REV. J. L. PORTER, A.M., F.R.S.L.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

With Maps and Illustrations.

A.A.C.17

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FIVE YEARS IN DAMASCUS,

ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER X.

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FROM the period of my arrival in Syria, in 1849, it was my desire, whenever opportunity should offer, to visit and explore the interesting district comprehended in the ancient provinces of *Batanæa*, *Auranitis*, and *Trachonitis*. This district is now inhabited by a mixed population of Christians, Druzes, and Muslems. Little is known of their character and habits; and no attempts have ever been made to communicate to them either secular or religious instruction. One great object I had in view in my proposed visit was to become acquainted with the people, and to ascertain whether schools could be advantageously established in any of the villages. The Haurân

being the granary of Damascus, the peasants frequently, and in large numbers, visit the city; I consequently considered that it might open up the way to more important labours if I could induce any of them to receive or purchase books, whether educational or purely religious. To secure the friendship of the leading Druze sheikhs, who are the actual rulers of the Haurân, was also advisable, and indeed essential, before any operations should be commenced.

But while these were the main objects of my proposed visit, I determined to lose no opportunity which my travels might afford me of investigating the topography and antiquities, or elucidating the geography and history, of this interesting region. Whatever might tend to illustrate and explain any passage in the Word of God, I have always considered it my duty carefully to observe and accurately to note; while traversing Bible-Lands, therefore, and visiting some of those cities and provinces whose names are among the earliest found in Scripture history, it will not be thought strange that I should linger amid their ruins, and investigate monuments that date back to the age of the patriarchs and prophets. And if these researches should enable me to solve some difficulties in Scripture geography, or to correct errors into which others have fallen, it will not be considered that I go beyond my proper sphere of labour, if I attempt to communicate to the world the results of my investigations.

A perusal of Burckhardt's valuable notes, and of the rough sketches of Buckingham, had given me some idea of the general features of the country, and of the almost innumerable ruins scattered over its surface; while a study of the Sacred Scriptures, of the writings of

Josephus, and of the erudite geography of Reland, had, in some degree, prepared me for profiting by a tour, and for identifying the situation and boundaries of the ancient provinces, and a few of the sites of ancient cities. The researches of the antiquarian in this country are greatly aided by the similarity between the present and the primeval languages. Names of places are thus, in many instances, preserved in their original form, or in some such form as tends to suggest the original. The lists of villages, ruined cities, and towns collected by Dr. Eli Smith, and published in the Appendix to Robinson's 'Researches in Palestine,' are, in this respect, of vast importance. Some deficiencies in these lists, so far as they refer to the provinces at present under consideration, I have been enabled to fill up from other sources; and I am glad to learn that we may soon expect a complete list of all the villages in Palestine and the territory of Damascus, from the Beyrout press, under the care and revision of Dr. Smith. These will serve as well to guide the traveller in his wanderings as the antiquarian in his researches.

I had already spent three years in Syria before an opportunity occurred of carrying out my intention with regard to the Haurân. I was hindered in part by the calls of duty, and in part by the disturbed state of the country; yet still my desire remained strong as ever, and was even increased by a more minute study of those sketches of its history and geography contained in ancient writers. The breaking out of the Druze war, in the autumn of 1852, took away all hope of visiting it for a lengthened period; but the defeat of the Government troops, and the consequent desire for peace on the part of the Sultan, again seemed to open my way. Mr. Wood, the British consul

at Damascus, was requested by the Pasha to act as mediator, after the representatives of some other European nations had volunteered their services and failed. This tended to increase the great influence he had formerly possessed with the Druzes, the dominant party in the Haurân. He arranged a meeting with Sheikh Saîd Jimblât, the most powerful and influential of all the Druze chiefs, and, in company with him, proceeded first to Edhr'a, but afterwards, on account of the scarcity of water there, to Busr el-Harîry. Here the sheikhs of the Haurân all assembled to receive the proposals of the Government, and discuss the terms of peace. It was a stormy scene; and more than once a peace congress was well-nigh changed into a fierce battle. The fanatical Muslems feared, or pretended to fear, treachery on the part of Mr. Wood and Saîd Beg, and once the cry was raised to pull down the house in which they were sitting. The proud Druze chief could ill brook such insults, and haughtily stated that if he had anticipated such insolence he would have brought from his native mountains such a force as would have effectually prevented its recurrence for the future. In fact, it was only the smallness of his retinue—about a hundred and fifty men—that prevented him from taking instantaneous revenge. Still, notwithstanding such threats and insinuations on the spot, and no less dangerous intrigues of disappointed consuls in Damascus, Mr. Wood, with his usual ability, succeeded in opening up communications which have secured a long truce, and promise to effect final reconciliation and peace.

Mr. Wood, on his return to the city, assured me of the practicability of a journey to that province, after the feel-

ings of the people had quieted a little, and the bandits, whom war ever draws toward it, had withdrawn to some other quarter. In the meantime I had received from Khurshid Pasha (General Guyon) a copy of a map of the Haurân, which had been constructed by a Turkish officer of engineers (Fezzy Beg). He had visited the country before the war, for the purpose of surveying it; but I afterwards found that, though his map contained some new and useful information, it was not constructed with any degree of care or accuracy. A sketch of this, as well as of Burckhardt's map, I took with me on my journey.

Toward the close of January 1853, an American gentleman, Mr. ——, arrived in Damascus, and expressed his determination to visit the Druzes of the Haurân; and I at once agreed to accompany him. The Rev. Mr. Barnett also expressed his desire to join our party. Mr. Wood kindly favoured our proposed journey, and promised us strong letters of recommendation to the five principal Druze sheikhs. The great difficulty now was to get to the Druze district. A blood feud existed between the Kurds and the Druzes; and the former, being irregular troops in the pay of the Government, were scouring the plain of Damascus, attacking and murdering little parties of Druzes wherever they could find them. The Pasha was either unable or unwilling to prevent these base and cowardly deeds; and thus, when it was the interest of the Government to conciliate the rebels, whom they were unable to subdue, and while they were compelled to supplicate foreign interference and mediation to aid them in their difficulties, they were permitting their own soldiers to perpetrate crimes which could not but excite the Druzes

to revenge, and at the same time disgust those whose mediation they were soliciting. And this is just a fair specimen of Turkish misrule. An incident that occurred near this city, only a few weeks before our journey, is worthy of being recorded as an example of the way in which affairs are managed by the Government in this unhappy land. A small party of Druzes were returning home after having disposed of their wheat in the city. They were seen and attacked by some Kurdish irregulars. In self-defence they fired upon their assailants, and killed the Kurdish chief. At length, overpowered by numbers, some being slain and a few wounded, they were led back prisoners to the city—their captors, no doubt, expecting soon to see their heads gracing the palace gate. The Pasha dismissed the Druzes in peace; and he dismissed the Kurds also with an *admonition* not to perpetrate such acts in future! The Kurds knew, however, and all the city knew, that twenty piastres were at that time given for each Druze head that was laid at the Pasha's feet. There are few Kurds but will risk an admonition for twenty piastres.

This blood feud prevented the Druzes from approaching the city; and hence our difficulty in obtaining an escort to the borders of their territory. The kindness of Mr. Wood again aided us. Mr. Misk, his dragoman, came to me on Saturday the 29th of January, bringing with him a Christian, an inhabitant of the village of Hît, in the Jebel Haurân. He informed us that a large caravan was to leave the city on Monday for his native village, taking the direct road by Nejha, and along the eastern border of the Lejah. This was the route which of all others I preferred to travel.

I did not expect to make any striking discoveries upon it; but I did hope and expect to see the features of the country and the character of the soil.

I lost no time in communicating with my companions, and making the necessary preparations for a fortnight's travel. A single change of clothes, a substantial *lehâf* to serve as bed and coverlet, a pocket sextant, a large and a small compass, with my note and sketch books, formed my whole luggage.

Jan. 31*st.*—Soon after sunrise Aiyûb (Job), our guide, appeared, and urged our immediate departure, as the caravan was then starting, and he was afraid of being left behind. My experience of Arab haste in such matters prevented all uneasiness; but as Aiyûb became boisterous in his urgency, and as our letters of introduction had not yet arrived, I gave him a note to Mr. Misk to bring the letters, and was thus relieved for a season. Our servants in the mean time arranged the travelling equipage; and by the time Aiyûb returned we were ready for the road. Our luggage was now packed on donkeys to be conveyed to Bawâbet Ullah, from whence we were to start, as neither promises nor entreaties could persuade the suspicious villagers to bring their horses to my house in the city.

The first appointed place of rendezvous was Bab Shurky, and there our little party was mustered. It consisted of Mr. Barnett, Mr. ——, myself, Nikôla (Mr. ——'s dragoman, formerly my dragoman), with Ibrahîm and Hâtem, servants. We were all well armed; for though we expected a hearty welcome from the Druzes, we well knew that the late war, and the probability of its renewal, had filled the country with armed marauders, against whom

our only security would be ability to repel aggression. We knew also that wandering parties of Arabs occasionally visited the districts we wished to traverse, and against these fire-arms would enable us to stand.

After a brief pause to ascertain that all was right, we set out, skirting the south side of the ancient city wall, and then entering the suburb of the Medân. After many turns and windings we at last emerged into the open country at the southern extremity of the city, by a gate near Bawâbet Ullah. Here we dismounted to await Aiyûb and his animals. A few scores of camels, passing out of the city by the several gates and portals near us, were the only signs we could see of the caravan. While standing here our city donkey-driver managed to pick a quarrel with a peasant from the Haurân. The result was, that the latter gave him a sound drubbing, and only desisted when I seized him by the neck, and at the same time threatened the impudent boy with my whip. Such is the state of affairs in this country, that every man must be, in most instances, his own peace-officer, thief-catcher, judge, and executioner. If one cannot redress his own grievances, there is little use in applying to the nominal authorities. A good deal of noise *may* be made, in case a complaint is lodged in the law-courts; a liberal *bakhshîsh* will be demanded, and *there*, in nine cases out of ten, the matter will end.

Aiyûb at last appeared, and with him a large company of men, horses, and camels. After some searching and much wrangling he succeeded in dragging from their reluctant owners two miserable-looking horses, not much larger than ordinary donkeys, and the state of whose

bodies did not speak well for the fatness of the pastures of Bashan. These our somewhat saucy servants were persuaded to mount; we, of course, rode our own steeds. The beds and other baggage were placed on the backs of camels, and on we swept with the now swelling caravan.

These arrangements, simple as they may appear, were not made with such order or despatch as might be expected by those unacquainted with Eastern life and travel. No genuine Arab can ever be persuaded to comply with any, even the most reasonable demand, without an amount of shouting, swearing, and even threatening, that, to the uninitiated, is almost appalling. For this reason, we, of course, took no part in any arrangements made. Aiyûb was our *wakîl*, or agent, and he managed the whole. It was amusing to see him seizing the animals he wished to hire, dragging their owners from their backs, and contending long and loudly about the disposition of the saddle-bags, *abeihs*, and numerous *et ceteras*, which the peasants always arrange for a saddle; and it seemed like the winding up of a comedy when he closed the scene by a *coup de main*, having snatched up the disputed property, and, with wild gestures, hurled it on the back of a passing camel. It was only when the actors assumed a more threatening and warlike aspect, or when the slow progress of events was stopped altogether in the heat of the fray, that Nikôla interfered.

I have detailed this little scene to the reader, because it is illustrative of the habits and character of the people. Civilization and education have not given to the poor Arab that suavity of manner and that courtesy to which we are accustomed in the West. Lying and deceit are

here universal, and therefore every man distrusts his fellow; and it requires vociferation and oaths innumerable to convince him that he is in earnest. It speaks well for the English character, that, wherever Englishmen have dealings, this stage-play is almost wholly dispensed with. And now in Beyrout, and even in some parts of Damascus, the most solemn assurance a native can give of the truth of his assertion is, that he *speaks as an Englishman*.

We left the gate of the city at half-past ten o'clock, and rode along the plain in a south-easterly direction, amid vast droves of camels. On each side of the road are extensive olive plantations, with intervening open fields of wheat and barley. After proceeding about a mile, the plain upon our right became entirely open—not a tree or fence to break the view, but one continuous green carpet for miles, to the base of the bleak and barren slopes of Jebel el-Aswad. The little village of Baweidah, farther to the east, surrounded with its gardens, appeared like an island at the foot of the hills.

In twenty-five minutes we passed Yelda, close upon the left, containing a few ruins, consisting of foundations of hewn stone and Corinthian columns of black porous basalt; but like many ruins in this land, there is no record of its history. In half an hour more we reached Kabr es-Sit, a populous village, surrounded by fields and gardens of great fertility.

This is considered a place of great sanctity by the Muslems, especially the *Shiites*, as it contains the tomb of Zeinab, the daughter of Fâtimeh and grand-daughter of Mohammed, and the wife of 'Omar Ibn el-Khattâb, the second Khalif. Zeinab died in the plain of Damascus, and

was buried in this village, which was formerly called *Râdyeh*; but after this time Kabr es-Sit, "the tomb of the lady." A little mosque, with a cupola and minaret, stands over the sacred spot; and during the season when the Persian pilgrims are going to and returning from the Haj, great numbers of them visit this tomb. The tall white minaret forms a conspicuous object over the whole plain. At this place we had expected the caravan to form in regular order; but we observed each company as it came up passing on across the plain. We dismounted to await the arrival of Aiyûb and his camels. Observing a respectably dressed Muslem, accompanied by a Bedawy in the costume of Ageil, standing near us, I inquired if he were going to the Haurân, and for what object, as it seemed strange that an inhabitant of the city should visit that district in such unsettled times. He replied that he was going to purchase wheat. The Arab, I found, was from Palmyra, but had been long resident in Damascus. He informed me with manifest sorrow that his native village was fast going to ruin. The increasing exactions of the Bedawîn, and intestine feuds, are yearly diminishing the number of its inhabitants. Only a short time previously, he stated, nearly a third of the village had left their homes and gone to another place, a day's journey farther east.

Aiyûb having arrived, and having provided a supply of barley for our horses, we mounted again at 12 o'clock. Eastward from Kabr es-Sit the plain is totally destitute of trees, and only a small part of it is cultivated. It is abundantly watered by the subterranean canals described in the last chapter. A beautiful mirage now relieved the bare monotony of the plain before us. The whole expanse

seemed a vast lake, and along the line of the low range of Jebel el-Aswad was a clearly defined shore-line; while the lofty Tell Abu Yazîd on our left appeared as an island. The camels a short distance in front seemed to be wading through the shallow water along the margin of the lake, and their shadows were reflected from its glassy surface. On advancing a little farther I was astonished to observe the camp of the Turkish army occupying the very same spot where I had seen it from Tell Abu Yazîd some three months before. There were the white tents, and the smoke of the camp-fires wreathing overhead. I had understood that the soldiers had been removed to Damascus at the commencement of the rainy season; but we all distinctly saw the camp now, and were engaged in discussing the subject when a swell in the plain shut it out from our view. On ascending the rising ground we looked again for it, but it was nowhere to be seen: we examined if any unevenness of the ground could still hide it; but no! it had vanished! The whole had been an optical delusion, strange as it was beautiful.

We now skirted the eastern base of Jebel el-Aswad, and I observed an ancient canal running along the lower slopes of the hills on the right. It had evidently been intended to bring water from Baweidah to irrigate the soil in this neighbourhood, and to supply the little village of Nejha. The ground along the base of this range is thickly strewn with boulders and small fragments of basalt, and the rock itself crops up over the soil in many places. The hills and the whole valley of the 'Awaj, from hence to Hîjâny, are composed of this species of rock. The junction of the limestone and trap in the plain is marked by a straight

line drawn from the large village of Darâya to Harrân el-'Awamîd, thus running in a direction nearly east and west. At the former place the boundary-line turns nearly south-west till it meets the 'Awaj, which then forms the dividing line to S'as'a, and westward to near the mouth of Wady Beit Jenn. The whole region westward and northward of this line is a soft, white, cretaceous limestone, abounding with fossils; while the district southward and eastward, as far as I have travelled, is one unbroken field of trap-rock. In Jebel el-Aswad are large quarries, from which are brought the black stones so much used in paving and building in the city.

Turning round the eastern extremity of these hills we came suddenly in sight of Nejha. On our right a little vale ran up among the hills, while on our left extended a fine alluvial plain covered with verdure. A few minutes more brought us to the village, situated on the summit of a rocky mound. It bears no resemblance to the villages in the plain, being constructed wholly of black stones instead of sun-dried bricks. The situation is fine,—a rich plain, watered by the 'Awaj, extends away to the east, but the total absence of trees, orchards, and gardens shows that it is on the outskirts of the inhabited country. It is the last inhabited village in this direction. To the west, from Nejha, the eye runs up the fertile valley of the 'Awaj, with its green corn-fields and verdant meadows, shut in by the bare and dreary slopes of Jebel el-Aswad and Jebel Mâni'a. The white villages of Adiliyeh and Kurjilleh, on the right bank of the river, a few miles higher up, contrast strongly with the dark sides and summits of Mani'a that tower over them. This fine valley

is almost a desert now, and the population is diminishing every year; but the remains of the ancient canal still existing, and the ruined and deserted villages around, prove that it was at one time densely peopled; and the traveller has only to look at the richness of the soil and the abundance of the waters to see what it might become under an encouraging government and in the hands of an industrious and enterprising people.

We remained in the village some time examining the features of the country, and the caravan, as group after group of camels passed by below, swept across the plain, and contributed to swell up the motley throng that assembled beyond the river. A cold wind, accompanied by a drizzling rain, now began to blow in our faces; so, wrapping our cloaks around us, and mounting our impatient horses, we descended the tell, and galloped across the rich meadow-land to the river-side. The 'Awaj is here spanned by an ancient and substantial stone bridge, at the distance of about half a mile from the village. After crossing it we reined up our horses in the midst of the caravan, now numbering several hundred camels. A scene of strange confusion here presented itself to our eyes, while a Babel of wild and discordant sounds fell upon our ears. Camels, broken loose from their drivers, ran about in all directions, threatening to overturn everything in their course. Others, pinioned to the ground by the feet of the Arabs, growled savagely, with open mouths, as their loads were shifted or more firmly bound. The men too, with shouts as loud and scarcely less deeply guttural, ran here and there to secure their animals and assist their companions; while some, with wild gestures, disputed

about the proper mode of packing and securing their goods. All stragglers fell into the ranks, and a few that had tarried were seen urging their animals onward with increased speed to join their companions. At this place, in fact, the proper march commenced, and order must henceforth be kept—the safety of all, we were informed, depended upon this. We had now entered the domains of the Bedawîn, who acknowledge no law but the sword, and no right but might. Our farther progress was liable to be disputed at any moment, and, consequently, every man now examined his musket and prepared for action. The attacks of the Bedawîn, when made, are sudden and impetuous, and resistance, if effectual, must be prompt and decided. During the winter season this route is, in general, pretty secure, as the Arab tribes are far distant on the banks of the Euphrates; but the late war had drawn these daring marauders from their accustomed haunts, and they endured the rain and the cold in the hope of plunder. It was far from certain, therefore, whether our course would not be intercepted: but still, whatever might occur, we had sufficient confidence in the strength of our caravan.

After about half an hour spent in arranging the loads and the order, the word was at last given to march, and the whole proceeded in a long column generally three deep. My horse becoming impatient, I rode to the front, where I was soon joined by my companions and by a Christian called Mûsa, who appeared to take the leadership. Mûsa was an old acquaintance, and he seemed no little astonished to find me here. He is son of the priest of Hît, and is besides the chief physician in the Jebel

Haurân; he is, consequently, held in high estimation by all, and has considerable authority. When I first saw him in Damascus I was struck with his fair complexion, ruddy cheeks, and fine flowing auburn beard; and now, with his bright kefîyeh flowing over his shoulders, and smiling countenance, his appearance was still more striking, and presented a marked contrast to his dark and wild-looking companions. He rode a white mare of good blood, and, from his dress and equipments, was evidently superior to his companions.

We left the river-side at 1·50, and our road led us nearly due south over a fertile plain, but altogether uncultivated. At 2·10, seeing a ruin on the top of a tell about half a mile on the left, we galloped up to it, and discovered it to be the remains of a comparatively modern village built of stones. Half a mile beyond it we crossed the dry bed of an ancient canal, which was apparently intended for the irrigation of the whole of this fine plain. It comes from Adalîyeh along the lower slopes of Mâni'a, and is probably a continuation of the canal that is led off from the 'Awaj at Kesweh.

This plain becomes more stony and the soil lighter towards the base of the low spur that runs out eastward from Mâni'a. At 2·45 we began the ascent of a rocky slope, and the path was in some places almost blocked up by huge fragments of basalt. About two miles farther eastward low spurs shoot out from these hills to the river-side, and shut in the plain; but beyond this the hills become a broad swell, and soon entirely disappear. In a quarter of an hour we reached the plateau on the top of the declivity, and here Mûsa ordered a halt. It appeared

that a Druze with some camels, the property of Sheikh Ass'ad of Hît, could nowhere be found, and fears were entertained that, if left behind, he might be attacked and murdered by the Kurds, or plundered, as the evening closed in, by the Arabs; and the Christians, of whom the caravan was almost exclusively composed, would be called to account for deserting him. It was a bleak and dreary spot where we stood as the imagination could conceive. Not a house, nor a tree, nor a living creature was within the range of vision, but a rolling plain, thickly covered with shapeless fragments of basalt, which were here and there thrown into heaps, but whether by the hand of man or by nature seemed doubtful. On the west a valley ran up into the centre of Jebel Mâni'a, but its sides were of a uniform slope, and the bare rounded summits above were featureless. The only evidence of the presence of man on this dreary desert, even during bygone ages, was a ridge of loose stones, the remains of an ancient wall, which ran in a straight line westward across the plateau, up the side of the valley, and over the summit of the hills in the distance. Our view towards the east was shut in by the rising ground, but the wall extended in that direction as far as we could see. This was probably originally built to check any sudden incursion of Arab horsemen from the desert into the fertile vale behind us, thus serving the same purpose as the great Roman wall across the northern counties of England.

After waiting twenty minutes, and ascertaining from a horseman who had galloped back some distance that the Druze had not yet passed Nejha, we again moved onward. The rain had now ceased, and, though it still continued

cold, we entertained less gloomy anticipations of our night's march. We still travelled nearly due south, descending a gentle but rugged and bleak slope, and in half an hour reached the side of a little plain with a deep alluvial soil, surrounded on all sides, except the south, by stony declivities. The great plain along the borders of Lejah opened up before us, and that wild region itself appeared in the distance. The lofty Tell Amâra rose up in the centre of it; and Jebel Haurân shut in the view more to the east. Some miles off to the left I saw large flocks, and a few horsemen wandering among them. These, I was informed, were the shepherds of the Druze village of Deir 'Aly, and some others on the borders of the desert.

We had now left the hills behind, and were sweeping across the rolling plain. The principal ridge of Jebel Mâni'a terminates considerably to the right of this road; but the plain for some distance to the south-east is diversified with low isolated ridges, intermixed with lofty conical tells, such as are common in all volcanic regions. At 4·15 we passed along the base of one of these tells, on the eastern side of which, near the summit, is a solitary terebinth-tree, a striking object in this naked district. There must be some peculiar sanctity attached to it, or it would not have escaped the axe of the Arabs. The tell itself receives the characteristic name of *Abu Shejar*, "the father of the tree." After passing it the plain on the west opened up more to our view, and I inquired for Merjâny; Aiyûb, who had joined us on his donkey, requested me to ride on with him and he would point it out. In twenty minutes more, after passing a low mound on the

right, we came in sight of that village, about an hour distant, situated at the foot of low hills. Beyond it rose the lofty range of Jebel Khiyârah, black and barren. On our left were some mounds with green patches of verdure on their sides and in the little vales between them. At 5 o'clock we passed their western base, and here crossed the bed of a shallow wady with some water lying in pools; and on its southern side a little fountain. Near the fountain are a few Arab tombs, with rough headstones; but this is all that marks the final resting-place of these sons of the desert. Around this place, and up among the little green valleys on the left, may be seen the hollow fireplaces, and oblong level spots, surrounded with rough stones, which always mark the favourite encampments of the Bedawîn. The spot is well chosen, and much frequented during the proper season. The water is close at hand, and from the heights above a commanding view is obtained of the more elevated portions of the plain northward, and of the broad expanse stretching away to the borders of the Lejâh.

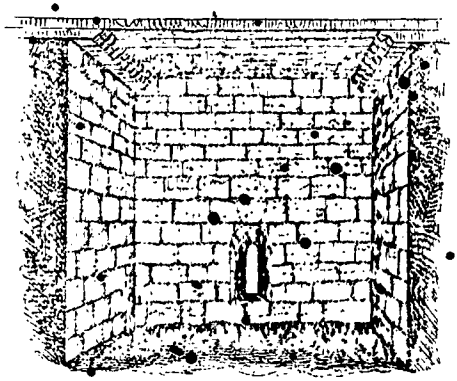
After passing this fountain we entered a plain, perfectly flat, and altogether different in character from that we had left. The soil is deep and rich, the surface entirely free from stones, and the whole presents the appearance of having, at no very remote period, been under cultivation. The borders of the Lejah were now clearly defined as a rocky shore, and we could distinguish several large villages and towns built among the rocks. Dark clouds hung over it, and added to the gloomy aspect of this forbidding region. Night soon closed around us, and, as dark clouds covered the whole heavens, we could not distinguish

objects even at the distance of a few yards. To us, strangers, the road, not very well defined at the best, was entirely undistinguishable. My horse had been restive all day, but when night came it was with difficulty I could manage him. He always insisted upon leading the van, and was thus ever and anon going off the path, and getting entangled in the wide fissures of the soil which the winter rains had not yet closed up. On compelling him to join my companions in the midst of the caravan, he dashed fiercely at one of the other horses, and he, rearing suddenly and wheeling round to avoid the onset, threw his rider. My fallen friend was detained some time in searching for his saddle-bags, and, on attempting to remount, the saddle turned and the horse galloped off in the dark. Of all this I knew nothing till I heard the cries far behind, and the shouts of the camel-drivers as the free steed ran madly past them. He halted at once, and the horse, with the true instinct of his race, when he rejoined his companions, waited for his master. Not long after this little incident we came to rugged and stony ground, though the only *visible* evidence we had of it was an increased *darkness* of the surface. A thick drizzling rain was falling, which, joined to the heavy black clouds that hovered over us, and the dark plain beneath, altogether obscured every object around; but the stumbling, and twisting, and winding of our horses, as they scrambled over and among masses of rock, were sufficient indications of the nature of the road. We had not proceeded far among the rocks when a halt was called, and a consultation held among the leaders of the caravan whether we should proceed at once, or wait for the light of the moon. The latter being determined upon, Mûsa requested us to follow him. This, however,

was no easy matter, as the camels had gathered in in great droves and long files, and these, added to the natural barriers of rocks and fissures, made locomotion somewhat difficult. I thought of dismounting, but my horse had long ago demonstrated that his vision was sharper, and his steps surer, than my own; so I kept a firm seat, and followed as nearly as I could the *voice* of Mûsa. In some eight or ten minutes I reached a spot where my horse came to a dead stand and refused to proceed. I urged and spurred him, but in vain. At last I got down to examine the nature of the barrier, and found a long line of squatting camels picketed in front. The voice of Mûsa in the mean time grew fainter until lost in the distance. It was now my time to shout Mûsa! Mûsa! And twenty others repeated the call from different places, but no Mûsa came. Aiyûb fortunately heard our calls and came up; and under his guidance we wound about until we thought we could distinguish the dark outlines of walls and buildings rising on each side. Here we dismounted and picketed our horses. Leaving our servants to look after the beds and luggage, we requested our guide to conduct us to some spot where we might get shelter from the rain. He said a house was ready for us, and he led us along over vast heaps of stones and jagged rocks till he brought us to a low doorway, through which we passed into a spacious apartment.

The house, of which we now took such unceremonious possession, seemed, internally at least, to have undergone little change from the time when its ancient master left it. The massive stone walls were unshaken; and the long slabs of black basalt that formed the ceiling lay as regularly, and fitted as closely, as when the architect had

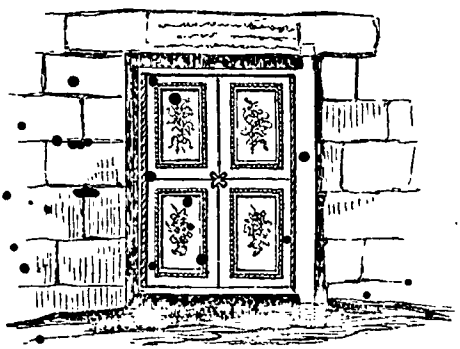
completed his labour; and the very door hung in its place uninjured by the lapse of many centuries. This would not seem so strange in a land of peace and civilisation, where antiquities are preserved with a species of religious care, but in this country, where all is ruinous, and on the borders of the desert, where the more peaceful peasants have for long years been driven away by the wild Bedawîn, to find a house *here*, complete in all its parts, cannot but strike the traveller with astonishment. Its preservation is solely owing to its vast strength. It would require too much labour and toil to overthrow it, and it consequently remains perfect. The walls are upwards of four feet thick, built of large blocks of squared stones, put together without cement. The roof is formed of flags about six inches



Interior of House in Burûk.

thick, eighteen inches broad, and twelve feet long. They are carefully hewn, and closely jointed; their ends rest upon other stones which project about a foot beyond the wall, and are moulded so as to form a cornice. The door of the apartment we first entered was a slab 4 feet 6 inches high, 4 feet wide, and 8 inches thick; it opens upon pivots, being projecting parts of the stone itself,

and working in sockets in the lintel and threshold, like all the modern gates and doors in Syria. It is on this account extremely difficult to displace the door, and I have since seen hundreds of them in their places even when other parts of the building were mere masses of ruin. The first apartment we entered in this house was 20 feet long, 12 wide, by about 10 high. From it



Stone Door.

a low door opened into another behind it of the same dimensions and character, and from this a larger door admitted to a third, to which there was a descent by a flight of stone stairs; it was a spacious hall, equal in breadth to the other two, and some 25 feet long by 20 high. A fine semicircular arch spanned it in the centre lengthwise, supporting the stone roof. The door was so large that camels could go in and out with ease.

Such is a specimen of the houses of Burâk, the name of the ruined town in which we now rested, and such, too, is a fair specimen of all the houses throughout nearly the whole of the Haurân. Many of them are still found uninjured, but very many are mere heaps of ruins. Some of them are large, with spacious courts in the interior, into which the chambers open; others again are small and

plain; but *all* are *massive* and *extremely simple* in their plan; thus denoting high antiquity.

Owing to the darkness of the night I was unable to ascertain, from personal observation, either the extent of this town or the general character of its buildings; but the men now sitting around us in this strange apartment were well acquainted with it, and they said that the houses were all of one kind, and that no public buildings of any extent or beauty existed. It is situated in the north-east corner of the Lejah, and is completely encompassed by broken masses of naked rock, the paths among which are tortuous and almost impracticable for horses. I inquired of Mûsa and several others about the Wady Liwa, and whether a stream now flowed through it. They all said that the wady is close to Burâk, running along the border of the rocks on the east side of it; and that no stream ever flows in it, except when the snow is melting in the mountains or heavy rain actually falling, and then it falls into the lake Hîjâneh. An intelligent Druze, whom I afterwards met in the Haurân, and who knew its whole course, confirmed this intelligence; and on examining this section of the country afterwards from the northern brow of the Jebel Haurân, with a telescope, I was able to trace the line of the wady. The distance of Burâk from the southern end of the lake Hîjâneh is about six miles, and the intervening plain is perfectly level, with a rich soil, but now wholly uncultivated.

Burckhardt visited this place in April 1812, having crossed the plain by way of Deir 'Aly and Merjâny. His account corresponds with that given above. He copied two Greek inscriptions among the ruins; they are not,

however, of any historical importance, being simple memorials of the time at which certain men, whose names are recorded, completed monuments erected to some friend or kinsman. One of them has the following date: Ετους η Περιτιου Ι. "In the year 8, and (month) Peritius 10." If it be the era of the Seleucidae that is here used, as appears probable from the fact that the name of the month in the inscription is Macedonian, then this inscription is of great antiquity, the date corresponding to B.C. 304.[2]

The walls and floor of the chamber were so damp that we dreaded the effects of sleeping in it, and determined to spend the time in conversation. The loquacious Arabs crowded in upon us eager to hear some exciting tale, and each one ready to add his own story to the common stock. Mûsa was the principal speaker, and he recited some wild incidents of Arab life and warfare, the scene of which was laid in the plain we had just traversed. This spot, it seems, the great tribe of the Sab'a, with whom the people of the Hauran are constantly at war, carefully and regularly watch every autumn, when the villagers are engaged in conveying their grain to the market of Damascus, and, whenever a favourable opportunity offers, they sweep across the plain on their swift horses, plunder the stragglers, or the caravan itself, and are off to the desert again ere succour can arrive. Fierce battles sometimes take place when attacks are rashly made. One stirring incident, in which Mûsa himself bore an active part, I shall here relate, as a specimen of the tales that amused us during the early part of the night, and also as an illustration of the state of affairs on the borders of the desert.

[2] Travels in Syria, p. 214.

About two years ago a large caravan, composed of the Druzes of Shŭka and Hît, with the Christians of Hiyât, left Damascus early in the morning and took the road by Nejha and the plain. A number of the Christians, with a few Druzes, deeming the road safe, and being lightly laden, proceeded in front of the main body. There were about thirty men and more than a hundred camels, but only some six or seven of the company were supplied with firelocks. They had passed Tell abu Shejar in safety, and were skirting the western base of the low hills in the plain, near the fountain, when Mûsa, who rode in front, saw a horseman suddenly disappear behind a rising ground half a mile eastward. He at once called a halt, and a Druze volunteered to go to the summit of an adjoining tell, and ascertain whether any marauding party was in sight. He soon returned and reported that the way was clear. Some now wished to remain here and await the arrival of the main body, but a majority laughed at the proposal, and they continued their march. Half an hour passed, and the most prudent and cautious were beginning to abate in their watchfulness, but just then a cloud of dust, far to the eastward, marked the approach of the dreaded enemy. On it rolled across the plain toward the terrified caravan. To form the camels into an irregular closely-packed circle was the work of a few minutes; the leaders, to which the others were fastened by strong cords, being dragged toward the centre. The little band of men took up their stations in different parts of this fortification. A large body of Arab horsemen, numbering about seventy spears, now approached, shouting their war-cry. The few Druzes of the caravan, levelling their

guns, gave back a stern defiance, and the marauders hesitated for a few minutes. As those in front drew up, a portly figure, distinguished from the rest by his scarlet cloak, burst from the midst of the cavalcade, and, calling on his men to follow, dashed onward. A young Druze fired the first shot, but without effect; then another followed with surer aim, and the mare of the Arab chief, with a tremendous bound, rolled over dead upon the plain. Her active rider jumped to his feet, and still led his men to action. Shot after shot was deliberately sent among them by the Druses and Christians as the Bedawîn vainly attempted to reach them with their long spears. On every side were efforts made to penetrate the dense mass of camels, but the sullen animals merely growled and stamped when pricked with the lances; being strongly bound together, they were forced to keep their places. Half an hour had already passed, and four of the Bedawîn lay upon the plain dead or dying. Their chief, mounted again on the mare of one of his fallen comrades, after galloping round the living rampart, suddenly wheeled his horse, and, approaching, severed the halter of one of the camels by a stroke of his scimitar, and then seizing it spurred away, dragging the animal after him, while another and another followed, urged on by the spears and shouts of his followers. Camel after camel thus left its place, and the little band within saw their living barricade fast moving away, and leaving them exposed to their infuriated enemies. Nerved by a sense of his extreme danger, Mûsa sprang forward, and, drawing his sword, cut the halter of one of the camels and succeeded in dragging it back. But quick as thought a Bedawy was upon him with his lance. Mûsa escaped

by darting under the camel, and succeeding in wounding at the same time by a blow of his sword the horse of his adversary. Other horsemen dashed to the spot, and Christians and Druzes ran forward. The conflict had reached a crisis; more than one had felt the keen point of the spears, and all began to think fortune had deserted them. Just then the caravan was seen approaching; and a little band of horsemen, whose white turbans showed them to be Druzes, came up at a gallop. The Bedawîn at once wheeled off and fled across the plain. A volley was sent after them, but, thanks to the pace at which both parties were going, without effect. It was deemed prudent not to give chace, as only twenty horsemen could be mustered, and two mares that had been caught by the Druzes were deemed sufficient recompence for the five-and-twenty camels that had been carried off.

During the recital of this incident I had lain down upon a heap of stones that was piled up along the wall of the apartment, and Mûsa had scarce concluded when I was sound asleep. In attempting to turn, some time afterwards, I rolled off the stones, and thus awoke. Finding my companions now engaged in spreading their *lehâfs* in the inner room, which seemed somewhat less damp, I followed their example, and was falling into a sleep again when the voices of Mûsa and Aiyûb were both heard, shouting "*Yullah! Yullah! Ya Beg!*" Jumping to our feet, we learned that the caravan was starting; and that unless we used quick despatch we ran a fair chance of being left behind. This did not quite suit our purpose, and so we made all possible haste. Our toilet consisted in rubbing our eyes and straightening the brims of our

hats, which their temporary use as nightcaps had in some measure deranged. We *pocketed* our breakfast while the servants were engaged in saddling our horses; and at half-past one o'clock we mounted and followed the caravan.

February 1*st*.—The moon now shone brightly, and half revealed the savage features of the environs of Burâk. Huge masses of rock rose up here and there, among and around the ruins, to the height of fifteen or twenty feet, with jagged summits and rugged sides. In the intervals were circular pits and yawning fissures, as many feet in depth, while the flat surfaces of naked rock along their sides were strewn with huge boulders and broken fragments of basalt. The path along which we rode was narrow and tortuous, and had evidently been formed by the hand of man, for we observed in many places deep cuttings in the solid rock. A few minutes after leaving the ruins we rode for some distance alongside an ancient aqueduct, constructed to conduct the winter stream into the great cisterns of the town, for summer supply. For nearly an hour we continued winding slowly through this labyrinth of rocks. This is a section of the celebrated Lejah, and, as that district is all like this specimen, and some of it much worse, I do not wonder that its inhabitants have so often defied and worsted the government troops, or that, from Josephus's time till the present day, it has formed the asylum of a *race of robbers*.

Soon after emerging from the defiles, in which our way had been impeded by the multitudes of camels and donkeys crowded together, we descended into wady Liwa, and crossed it diagonally to the eastern bank. Here having surmounted the gentle slope we rode along a rolling plain

with occasional boulders of basalt and some rock-fields shooting out like spurs from the Lejah. Trees also sprang up here and there, both on the east side of the wady and among the rocks of the Lejah on the west. We had advanced far in front of the great caravan, in the rear of which we had left Burâk; and as both Mûsa and Aiyûb had disappeared in the crowd, we felt uneasy at being thus left alone. We halted twenty minutes, and the front ranks came up, and, on inquiring of them, we learned to our surprise that Mûsa was in front with another division of the caravan. On receiving this intelligence we spurred on our horses to a fast gallop, and were soon alone in the midst of a wild dreary region. The path here became stony, and was not very clearly defined; deep gullies, filled with mud and water, occasionally made a slight détour necessary. On we swept, however, over plain and through defiles, trusting to our general knowledge of the direction in which we ought to travel to guide us in the right path. At last the tinkling of bells was heard in front, and we overtook a little company just as the dark walls of Sauwarah were seen a short distance on our right. It was now 3·35 A.M.

The ruins of Sauwarah are of considerable extent, and resemble those of Burâk. Soon after passing this town I observed large numbers of regularly constructed square fences, made up of loose stones. This, I was informed, was one of the encampments of the army of Ibrahîm Pasha during the Druze war of 1839. Near this spot the Druzes issued from the defiles of the Lejah in full force, and defeated the soldiers with great slaughter, following the fugitives across the plain nearly to Hîjâneh. The country

on our left was now open, and apparently perfectly level, but the banks of the wady were rocky and irregular, while the Lejah beyond it presented the same uniform appearance of a broken rocky surface, the side of it being clearly defined, and generally corresponding with the left bank of the Liwa. Here, as elsewhere, it has an elevation above the level of the surrounding plain of from twenty to thirty feet. The wady appeared to be from forty to fifty feet deep, and has a very tortuous course.

We saw a bright light far away in front, which at one moment decreased so as to be almost invisible, and the next shot up into a tall flame. Our companions at first thought it was some party of Arabs watching their flocks, but, on ascertaining that it lay beyond the bounds of the Lejah, they said that no shepherds would venture to kindle a fire in such a conspicuous place if their flocks were there. Leaving the section of the caravan with which we had ridden for a time, we set out at a gallop towards the fire. An hour's fast ride, during which we observed several ruined villages on the borders of the Lejah, brought us to the spot; and a wildly picturesque scene there presented itself to our view, such as I had seldom witnessed. A party of our companions had assembled to rest for an hour or two beside a large cairn of stones, and had collected furze and brushwood sufficient to make a large fire. The fitful blaze revealed the dark countenances, piercing eyes, and gaudy flowing robes of the Arabs, as they squatted around or stood leaning upon their long guns, while the background was filled up with long strings of camels intermixed with horses picketed round the rocks and among the oak-trees. We were glad to distinguish

among the group the beaming countenance of our friend Mûsa. The whole party mounted soon after our arrival, and we set out together on our march.

Proceeding at a fast walk, we passed several large companies of camels and donkeys. The dangerous part of the route was already far behind, and each made the best of his way homeward. With the earliest dawn the dark outline of the lofty Tell Khaledîyeh appeared on the eastern horizon, and as the morning advanced we could distinguish the ruins that crown its summit. We also observed that the whole plain on our left exhibited signs of cultivation, and appeared to have been at one time divided into regular fields by stone fences, portions of which still remain, while the straight lines of almost all can be traced from the ridges of loose stones. These commence on the eastern side of the Liwa, now a narrow ravine, with precipitous rocky banks, and extend over the level plain as far as we could see. In the plain we could not see a single trace of habitation, but on the borders of the Lejah we noticed many towns and villages half ruinous and wholly deserted. These all present the same general features, being built of black basalt; the houses are low, and the walls of great thickness and strength. In every village are several square towers from thirty to forty feet high, resembling ancient belfreys.

At 6·15 we crossed the rocky bed of a winter torrent coming into the Liwa from the east, apparently from the neighbourhood of Tell Khaledîyeh. Here on our right, within the border of the Lejah, stands the large ruined village of Hadr, containing some extensive and substantial buildings; above it about twenty minutes is another

village, and opposite the latter, on a mound on the east bank of the wady, is another village of considerable size, but more ruinous than those within the confines of the rocks. Many other large villages and towns were within sight, and appeared from the distance as if their houses were still standing. Since the morning light had enabled us to examine more minutely the features of the country through which we travelled, we had observed very distinct traces of a Roman road running in a straight line along the east bank of the Liwa. In some places it is almost perfect; the fine pavement being unbroken by the traffic and wear of centuries. It is most probably a continuation of that which we had seen excavated among the rocks at Burâk. On the south bank of the wady above referred to, as coming in from the east, the road branches—one branch continuing along the side of the Lejah, and the other turning up the long slopes on the left. We were now far in advance of the caravan, and of all our companions, and did not know which way to take: we were consequently compelled to halt. I employed the time profitably in taking bearings and noting the features of the Lejah and mountains at whose northern base we now stood. Galloping to the summit of a tell, I had a fine view over the wilderness of rocks westward; and was no little astonished at the vast numbers of towns and villages within the range of vision. The whole country around was at one time densely populated; every available spot along the sides of the wady, as well as the great plain eastward and the mountain-sides above us, bears the marks of former careful cultivation. The surface of the soil is in some places very strong, but the stones have been collected into

heaps, and many of them used in the erection of fences; the intervening soil is rich and loamy. On the east bank of the Liwa, the ground, from this place southward, rises up with an easy and uniform slope to the heights at Shŭka; and likewise on the southern side of the wady that comes in from the eastward there is a gentle ascent to the same place from the broad plain; this is the commencement of the Jebel Haurân.

After twenty minutes delay an old man rode up to us and directed us in the road to Hiyât. We did not consider it necessary to wait upon the caravan or our guide, more especially as the rain was falling heavily, and a cold wind blowing in our faces. The road we were directed to follow led south by east up the easy slopes, which are here bleak enough, not a tree or a shrub to diversify the naked scenery. The soil is extremely fertile; but as the basaltic rock occasionally crops over it, and large boulders and broken fragments lie scattered thinly over its surface, the whole has a ragged and forbidding aspect. And there were no grand features to relieve the monotony. The mountain summits in front were concealed by the heavy drifting clouds; while to the right and left no object was visible save the rounded peaks of Tell Sheihân and Tell Khaledîyeh, peeping over the white mist that enveloped their bases.

After ascending about three-quarters of an hour, and surmounting a little eminence, we began to observe the first signs of *modern* cultivation; and we also obtained our first view of the village of Hiyât, standing upon the hill-side above us like a huge fortress. On our left, also, we saw several castle-like villages, some on the summits of

tells and others at their bases. The signs of life and industry now appeared in the fields on every side. Numerous yokes of oxen were engaged in turning up the fertile soil, with ploughs which are no doubt exact counterparts of those used in the days of the patriarchs, and by the subjects of the mighty *Og* whose ancient kingdom we were traversing. It will be seen from the accompanying

sketch, which I took upon the spot, that no improvement can have been made in the plough since those early days, as a more simple instrument could not possibly be devised. The ploughman, too, still carries his goad—a weapon apparently more fitted for the hand of the soldier than the peaceful husbandman. That here figured is of the "oak of Bashan," and measured upwards of ten feet in length. At one end was an iron spear, and at the other a piece of the same metal flattened. One can well understand how a warrior might use such a weapon with effect in the

battle-field; and after seeing and handling this excellent specimen I did not think it so very wonderful that Shamgar, the Israelitish judge, should have slain six hundred men with an *ox-goad*.[3]

At 8·30 we reached the village of Hiyât, and rode at once to the sheikh's house, where we were received with great distinction. We simply announced ourselves as Englishmen, and this was sufficient to open to us the heart and home of the noble Druze. Our horses were taken and fed; the reception-room was refitted with clean mats and cushions from the harîm; and, what was more acceptable than all, a good fire of charcoal was kindled upon the hearth. Coffee was produced, roasted, pounded, and presented with all due formality. The conversation gradually turned upon the all-engrossing topic, the recent war, and the probability of its renewal. This was the very subject we wished to avoid until we had seen one of the principal sheikhs and presented our letters of introduction. Feigning anxiety about Mr. —— and Nikôla, who had ridden on before us, and whom we had not yet seen, I left the apartment to make inquiries. The sheikh, hearing my questions, at once sent two or three men in search of them, who soon came back with the intelligence that they had passed on to Hît without stopping. I now expressed a desire to see the various ruins of the village; and a young Druze offered to act as my guide. I accepted his offer gladly, being anxious to avoid the questions of the sheikh, and no less so to commence an inspection of ruins so remarkable in themselves, and so interesting from the historic associations connected with the country.

[3] Judges iii. 31.

Hiyât is built on the gentle slope of the hill-side, in the form of a quadrangle, and is somewhat less than a mile in circumference. The houses are all constructed of roughly hewn stones, uncemented, but closely jointed. They are massive and simple in their plan, giving evidence of remote antiquity. The present inhabitants have selected the most convenient and comfortable chambers, and in these have settled down without alterations or additions. The roofs are all of stone, like those of Burâk, and so also are the doors; but I observed in one or two places that the stone doors had been removed and wooden ones substituted. There is no structure in the village with any pretension to architectural beauty; but on the eastern side, near a large tank, there are ruins with fragments of ornamented cornices and pediments: these are now so completely destroyed that it is impossible to ascertain even the plan of the original building. From a stone near it I copied the following inscription. It is on a handsome tablet, and the letters are beautifully formed:—

ΑΒΕΙΒΟCΑΥ
ΜΟΥΚΑΙΑΕ
ΔΟCΚΑΙΑΥΜΟC
ΥΙΟΙCΑΒΑΟΥ
ΘΙΟΥΤΟ////
ΟΝ ΠΟΙΗCΑΝ

"Abeibus the son of Aumus, and Aëdus and Aumus the sons of Sabaus, erected this memorial to their uncle."

It will be observed that the names on this monumental tablet, and on almost all the others found in this province, are Syriac or Hebraic in their character. There was another short inscription in this building, and I saw several on the houses in the centre of the village; but as I had

then the impression that Buckhardt had visited this place and copied them all, I did not wish to spend time in repeating his work. I have since regretted that I did not transcribe them, though it is probable that they contain no historical information of any importance. I estimated that about one-half of the houses in this village still remain perfect, or nearly so, and quite habitable; but not more than a fourth of these were occupied at the time of my visit.

On returning to the sheikh's house, after a brief inspection of the ruins, I found that our servants had arrived, and that a horseman had also come from Sheikh Ass'ad of Hît, to conduct us to his residence, where our companion was comfortably installed. The attentions of our worthy host and of the Druzes of the village were now beyond all bounds. His house, he assured us a score of times, was illumined by the light of our countenances, and his village honoured by our presence. He absolutely refused to permit us to depart until the next day, and he would listen to no reasoning and no excuses of ours. We began to fear that an excess of hospitality was going seriously to interfere with our time and researches; but the messenger of Ass'ad, seeing our perplexity, came to our rescue, and compromised the affair by proposing that we should eat breakfast with him and then proceed to Hît. Breakfast accordingly soon appeared, and we did full justice to the eggs, milk, and honey, with which we were liberally supplied.

On our way to Hît we visited a large house, or palace, that stands about three hundred yards east of Hiyât. It is a fine structure, and must in its palmy days have presented

a striking appearance. In front was a paved courtyard, surrounded by a wall, and having a gateway opposite the entrance door. The main door is now choked up with heaps of fallen stones; but a side door, about eight feet high and of proportional width, with fine folding doors of stone, opens into a spacious chamber. From this a narrow winding staircase leads to an open *divan*, supported in front by an arch, similar to the *lewans* of the modern Damascus houses. This apartment commands a noble view over the whole country northward and westward to Antilibanus and Hermon. On each side of this divan are large apartments, with windows in front, upwards of six feet high, and having folding shutters of stone, still in their places. Descending from the terrace, to which I had climbed to enjoy the splendid prospect, to the courtyard in front, I observed the following inscription beside one of the windows. There is another beside the great arch of the divan, but I had not time to copy it. The letters of both are beautifully formed:—

ΜΑΝΩCΘΑΙΜΟΥ
ΚΑΙΥΙΟΙΑΥΤΟΥΕ
ΔΩΚΑΝΕΚΤΗC
ΟΙΚΟΛΟΜΙ////Λ
ΧΥΑΛCΧΕΙΛ
ΑCΚΑΙΤΗΝΕΥ
ΡΑΝΕΥCΕΒΟΥΝ
ΕΚΤΟΚΥΡΙΩΝ

Mr. Barnett in the mean time copied another from a loose stone beside the gate of the courtyard, on which it is recorded that a certain Proclus, the son of Aumos, dedicated

a monument to the gods in honour of his son Aumos; but there is no date attached to any of these inscriptions, and no name affording any key to their age.

Leaving this interesting ruin, we rode up the hill-side, through fine grain-fields, to Hît, which we reached in half an hour. We were led immediately to the house of Sheikh Ass'ad 'Amer, who received us with every demonstration of respect and welcome, having come out to the gate of his courtyard to meet us. We were ushered into the reception-room, a mean, half-ruinous, and dirty apartment, where a crowd of villagers and others were assembled. The massive stone roof was supported by antique columns, and in the centre of the floor was a square hearth, sunk about six inches below the rough pavement. Here blazed and crackled an immense fire of charcoal. There was no opening or chimney above to let out the volumes of smoke, but in the midst of the blazing mass was a huge bar of iron, which was intended to prevent any deleterious effects from the fumes of the charcoal. Round the hearth stood a formidable array of pots and boilers of various sizes, and they had all the appearance of having been much used and seldom washed, at least externally, as they were covered with a thick crust of ashes, smoke, and coffee-grounds. Whether the internal parts were cleaner than the external I had no means of judging, as coffee, when prepared in the Arab style, has the valuable property of completely hiding all extraneous matter that may find its way into it. It is an undeniable fact, however, that this universal beverage, however it may be manufactured by the Arabs, is not only palatable when served up in the tiny cups, but refreshing and even delicious. Beside the hearth lay a small circular shovel, with a long and massive iron handle

curiously ornamented, while attached to the top of it by a brass chain was an iron spoon. This is the coffee-roaster. Opposite stood the mortar, of black wood, carved with quaint devices and figures, and beside it was the pestle, about two feet long, also finely carved. I had never before seen such a complete coffee-service, and I consequently sketched them roughly in my note-book.

I presented our letter of introduction, and the sheikh, after reading it and seeing coffee properly served, left the room. In about half an hour he returned, and invited us to another apartment in the harîm, which had been prepared specially for ourselves. Here we found comforts such as we had not anticipated. The floor and divans of the spacious apartment were covered with rich Persian carpets, and cushions of embroidered velvet were arranged against the wall, while three immense *mankals* of blazing charcoal diffused an agreeable heat through the chamber.

Our kind host, in introducing us to our new quarters, made many apologies for the poor accommodations he offered us; his best furniture, he said, had all been removed to the city during the time of the war, and he had not yet brought it back.

Sheikh Ass'ad 'Amer is a member of the noblest family in the Haurân, and he is, besides, one of the handsomest men I have seen in Syria. His countenance is mild, and the expression of his features very pleasing. A soft voice, and gentle but easy and dignified manners, sufficiently indicated the character we had heard of him—that of a man humane, hospitable, and courteous to all. His appearance had little of the fierce daring that is almost universally pictured in the countenances of his race, but the compressed lip and calm steady eye show that he does not lack the courage and firmness which appear to be inherent in the Druze people. We were afterwards informed that he had taken no part in the late war, and that he had sent all the Christians of Hît and Hiyât to Damascus, to escape the ravages of the soldiers and Arabs. Indeed, one would suppose that the history of his family might afford too fearful proofs of the horrors of war for him again lightly to engage in it. Three of his brothers and four of his nephews were slain in battle, and of these *four fell by his side in one day!*

Our reception in his house and his attention to us during our short stay were in every way calculated to establish the high name he has obtained for generous and profuse hospitality. Had it not been for his deserved popularity in this respect, combined with the mildness of his rule and his kindness to all under him, he could not

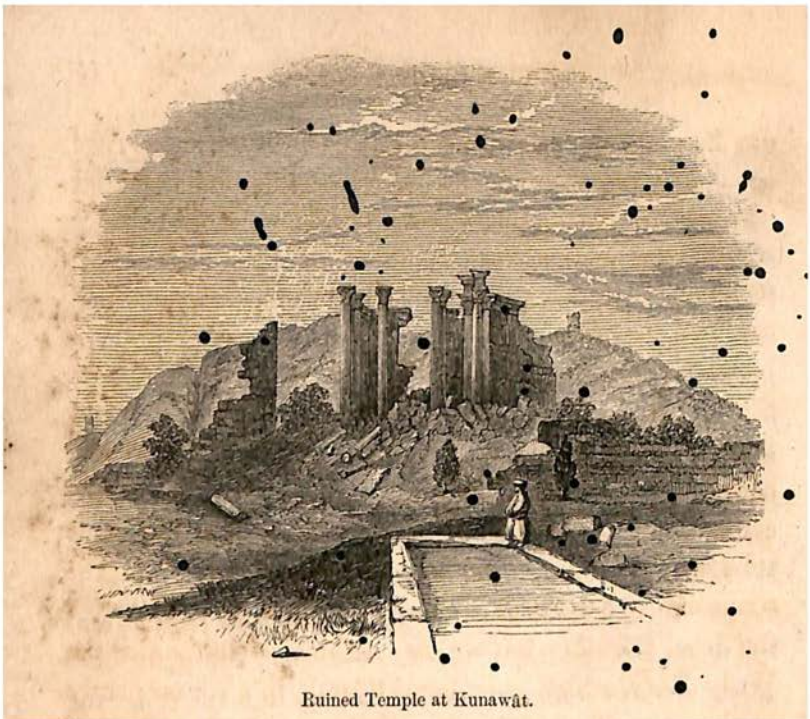
have dared to remain neutral during the war. Next to bravery in battle, to be reckoned hospitable is the proudest distinction an Arab chief can obtain. A plentiful repast of honey, *dibs*, butter, and various kinds of sweetmeats, was served up soon after our entrance, and at sunset a feast was prepared for us which far surpassed anything of the kind I had before seen. A whole sheep, roasted and stuffed with rice, graced the centre; beside it was a huge dish of *pillau*, some three feet in diameter. Round these were ranged nearly twenty other dishes of various kinds of dainties, including fowls, soups, *kibbeh*, *burghul*, and a host of others. Round these again were ranged the thin cakes of bread in little piles, on the top of each of which was placed a wooden spoon, the only instrument used in this primitive land in taking food, and even this is a recent importation. All the dishes were of copper, tinned, and they were placed on a large circular mat in the middle of the floor. The guests squatted round the dainties, each one stretching forward hand or spoon, and helping himself to whatever he preferred. We were first invited to dine, and, having finished, the other guests, with the servants, advanced. Then a portion was set aside on a separate mat for the sheikh; and the members of his household, retainers, and such of the villagers as were present, afterwards fell upon the remainder. Before this third relay the pyramid of rice soon disappeared; the bones of sheep and fowls were stripped of every vestige of flesh; and the soup, burghul, and pillau were thrown into one huge dish and speedily devoured.

But enough of a Druze feast. Even so much I would not have inflicted on my reader, but that it serves to show

the primitive state of society in this country, and that, in this ancient kingdom of Bashan, the lapse of three thousand years has effected but little change in manners and customs. The hospitality of former days still remains—strangers could not then pass the house or tent of the patriarch without being constrained to go in and take food; and so it is even now. The wonderful expedition in the preparation of food, when the lamb, or kid, or fatted calf was brought and killed, and the bread was kneaded and baked, and the dainties thus hastily prepared were set before the stranger—all this is illustrated here, at the present time, and in the ordinary incidents of every-day life. It seemed to me, as I wandered among these hills of Bashan, as if time had retrograded many long centuries. The strange stories I used to read in boyhood beside a mother's knee, in that ponderous old Bible, were now realized. *These* surely are the tents of Abraham; or *these* are the dwellings of Israel. These are the very salutations with which the patriarchs were wont to address strangers; and these the prayers for their safety and welfare when they took their departure. At whatever house we lodged a sheep or a lamb was killed for us, and fresh bread baked. It was sometimes near sunset when we reached the house; but in due time the dainties appeared. To whatever village we went among the Druzes, pressing invitations were given us to stay and eat. Once and again has one seized my horse's bridle, and said, "Will not my lord descend while his servants prepare a little food?" In one village our intercession saved a lamb which we saw hurried away to slaughter just as we entered the street, before even a word had been spoken. The chief had seen us approach-

ing, and "he made haste to kill a lamb;" fortunately we were in time to save it, by assuring its hospitable master that we *could not* remain. At another village where we took refuge from a passing shower, we observed the flour taken and the water poured upon it, to prepare unleavened cakes; and it was with much difficulty we could prevent the work from being prosecuted.

These things may seem trifling; but they are trifles which strikingly illustrate Bible stories. It is by such incidents that Bible scenes are indelibly impressed on our memories, and the truthfulness of the narratives in God's Word irresistibly forced on our minds. Could stronger evidence be given of the truth and faithfulness of a narrative some three thousand years old, than the witnessing of every little circumstance attending it realized in the ordinary customs of the people now residing on the spot where it was first enacted? Bible story assumes a living character when studied in this land. The localities, the costumes, the manners and customs, are unchanged. The language too, though different, is nearly allied to the Hebrew; and the modes of expression and set forms of salutation are almost identical.



Ruined Temple at Kunawât.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM HÎT TO KUNAWAT — THE NORTHERN SECTION OF JEBEL HAURÂN.

Topography of the plain of BASHAN — Singular features of the Lejah — Vast numbers of deserted towns — Buildings of Hît — Their antiquity — Inscriptions and dates — Visit to Bathanyeh, *Batanæa* — Ancient houses — Deserted towns — The province of *Batanæa* identified — Stone doors — Druze horsemanship — Visit to Shŭka, the ancient *Saccæa* — Interesting ruins — Ancient churches — Errors in map of Berghaus — Position of Sŭfâ — Wady Liwa — Visit to Shŭhba — Causes of the Druze war and tyranny of Turkish rulers — Ruins of theatre, temples, &c. — Extinct crater — Identification of site — Princes of Shehâb — Terraced hills — Mourning for the slain in battle — Ancient towns — Ruins of Suleim identified with *Neapolis* — Beautiful mountain scenery — Visit to Kunawât, KENATH — Splendid ruins — A Druze schoolmaster — Character of the Bedawîn — Description of Kunawât — Historical notices — Date of principal buildings.

February 2nd. — THIS morning dawned beautifully. The sky was unclouded, the mists, which on the previous

day hung around the hills and settled upon the plains, had completely disappeared, and the atmosphere was clear and transparent. Ascending to the roof of the sheikh's house, which commands a view of the whole plain from these mountains to the snow-capped Hermon, I examined with care the features of the country. The district lying between Jebel Haurân on the south-east, and Jebel esh-Sheikh on the north-west, is one continuous plain, about forty miles in breadth. On its northern side the low barren ridge of Jebel Khiyârah extends nearly ten miles across it. On the south it has no natural boundary, as it runs unbroken far as the eye can reach even from the commanding heights of Sŭlkhad, on the southern brow of the Jebel Haurân; but we may assume as its border the Wady *Zêdy*, which runs from Bŭsrah in a course nearly north-west, till it joins the Sheriat el-Mandhûr. This district embraces the whole of the plain of *Haurân*, the whole of the *Lejah*, with large portions of *Jedûr* and *Jaulân;* and these modern provinces respectively correspond pretty nearly with the ancient *Auranitis*, *Trachonîtis*, *Ituræa*, and *Gaulanitis*. The Lejah is the most remarkable of these provinces; and, in a geological point of view, the most wonderful district I have ever seen. I shall have occasion to speak more fully of it, as well as of the others, in the sequel; but I refer to it here to enable the reader to follow me in my description of the physical features of the country. As seen from Hît the Lejah resembles a lake agitated by a strong wind, and any one who has seen Loch Lomond while a winter tempest swept over it, and the troubled waters assumed the gloomy hue of the clouded heavens, may form some idea of the appearance of the Lejah as seen from this place. Its eastern

border is very clearly defined along the side of the Wady Liwa, beyond which stretches out a broad plain, far as the eye can see. The whole plain of the Haurân is diversified by numerous conical tells, which rise up at intervals. There are only two of these tells within the borders of the Lejah—Tell Amâra, beside the village of 'Ahiry, and Tell Sumeid.

While seated on the house-top the sheikh came up, and, on my remarking the extent of this prospect and the large number of towns and villages embraced in it, he volunteered to tell me the names of them all, and I gladly wrote them down as he enumerated them. The bearings of the most important of these I afterwards had an opportunity of taking with my large compass. While I was thus engaged Mr. Barnett was busy in search of inscriptions; and on finishing my observations I joined him, and we made a hasty survey of the ruins.

The village is about a mile and a half in circumference, and the general character of the architecture is similar to that of Hiyât. There are several square towers like belfries, but the buildings to which they are attached have nothing about them of the nature of ecclesiastical edifices. There is one tower of much superior workmanship to the rest, though of the same dimensions and plan. It stands apart from other buildings, and is evidently a complete structure in itself. In almost every town and village I visited in these mountains I observed one or more similar towers, and my impression is they were intended for tombs. Those I afterwards found at Kunawât have still the sarcophagi in them. The tombs on the hill-sides near Palmyra are of the same character, though in general much larger and more highly ornamented. Many of the

ancient streets in Hît can be traced, notwithstanding the masses of ruins and rubbish that have accumulated in them during the course of ages. They are narrow and tortuous, and thus bear a marked contrast to those of other towns in this region which are manifestly of Roman origin, or at least were reconstructed in the Roman age. The houses are all massive and simple in plan, with stone roofs supported on arches, and stone doors. Some of the latter are finely panelled, and otherwise ornamented with tasteful mouldings.[4]

Among the ruins of Hît there is a considerable number of Greek inscriptions, some of which have been copied by Burckhardt, and may be seen in his 'Travels in Syria.' Mr. Barnett and I copied all we could find, and succeeded in obtaining some which Burckhardt had overlooked. The latter I will here insert.

The first is from a stone over the door of the sheikh's house. It merely records the dedication of some building or altar to Jupiter by a certain Arabianos (?) :—

1. ΔΙΙΜΕΓΙCΤΩΑΡΑ
ΒΙ ////ΝΟCΔΙΟΜΗΔΟΥC
ΚΑΤΥΧΗΝΑΗΓΕΙΡΕΝ

The second is from a small building resembling a fountain on the north side of the town, and is to the effect that *Aelius Mazimos* the Governor erected the structure :—

[4] In this town a large majority of the houses are mere heaps of ruins; many, however, are still nearly perfect, and the present inhabitants occupy exclusively ancient dwellings.

2. ΑΙΛΙΟCΜΑΖΙΜΟCΕΠΑΡΧΟC
ΤΗΠΑΤΡΙΔΙΕΚΤΙCΕΝΔΙΑ
ΗΡΩΔΟΥΙΔΙΟΥΚΑΙΔΙΑ
ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ·ΜΑΛΧΟΥΚΑΙ
ΑΔΔΟΥΑΚΡΑΒΑΝΟΥ
ΕΠΙΜΕΛΗΤΩΝ.

The third is from beside a door in the building called the church:—

3. ΙΔΡΥCΕΦΑΙΔΡΟΝ
ΔΕΜΟCΕΕΙΘΗΝΩΝΚΑΙCΑΡΠΙΩΝ
ΕΚΦΙΛΟΤΙΜΙΗCΞΥΝΗCΚΛΕΟCΑΦΘΙ
ΤΟΝΑ

On the east side of the village, on a large stone, lying beside the foundation of a small square structure of very superior masonry, is the following inscription in good characters:—

	ΟΛΒΙΕΑΝΔΡΩ	Ν
	ΦΙΛΙΠΠΕΔΟΥΚ	ΙΝΑ
	ΡΙΕΤΑΞΕΩCΔΟΥ	
ΚΟC	ΟCΜΝΗΜΑCΥΝ	ΗΥΛΙ
ΕΚΘ	ΕΜΕΝΩΝΕΓΙΡ	ΑC
ΑΜ	ΦΕΡΑΨΑCΟCΥΝ	Η////ΔΥ
ΠΑ	ΡΑΚΟΙΤΙΚΑΙΤΕ	ΗΝ
Ν	ΟΙCΙΕΙCΚΛΕΟCΑ	ΕΙ

ΚΑΙCΑΛΑ////ΜΑΝΜC

Of the inscriptions copied by Burckhardt, one appears to have the date 14 of the Bostrian era, which would be

equivalent to A.D. 120; and on another is the date κφ, 520, probably of the era of the Seleucidæ, and thus corresponding to A.D. 208. But none of the inscriptions as yet discovered, so far as I can understand them, throw any light on the ancient name of the place.

At Hît there is no fountain of living water, but in the centre of the town is a spacious tank for collecting rain-water during the winter. There is besides, we were informed, a subterranean aqueduct coming from the mountains toward the south, which still conveys sufficient water for the domestic uses of the inhabitants. Beyond the walls is a large subterranean reservoir, and from this small canals formerly conducted the water to each of the principal houses. We did not see any of these works, but we drank of the water, and found it excellent, and we were assured that even during the heat of summer it is cold as ice. It is generally believed that the source is somewhere in the distant mountains, but I think the water is collected in the same way as many of those streams which are now seen in the plain of Damascus, by a canal carried along for several miles at a little depth beneath the surface. Due south from Hît, about ten miles distant, a lofty conical peak shoots up over the surrounding hills, and forms a prominent object in the landscape. It is called *Tell Abu Tumeis*, and is one of the highest summits in the Jebel Haurân. It is visible from a great distance like its rival the *Kuleib*, and these two are remarkable as standing at about equal distances from each end of the mountain-range.

Our kind host used every effort to persuade us to spend the day with him; but when he saw that we were deter-

mined on proceeding, he sent with us his nephew and another horseman, to serve as both guide and guard of honour, while he himself stated that he would ride direct to Shŭhba, and acquaint his brother Fâres of our intention to visit him. We ordered our servants to accompany him with the baggage, as we wished to make a long *détour* in order to visit the ruins of Bathanyeh and Shŭka.

At 11·10 we rode out of the court-yard, amid the *salâms* and prayers of the assembled villagers, and proceeded across the fields in a direction about north-east straight towards the ancient town of *Bathanyeh*. The soil in this region is of unrivalled fertility, and the wheat is celebrated as the finest in Syria. The fields were already green with the new crop, which was springing up with a luxuriance seldom seen in other parts of Syria. In several places I observed traces of an ancient road, with large sections of the pavement still remaining, and the foundations of walls along each side. The day was bright and cool, the turf firm and smooth, our horses fresh, and our own spirits high, the effect of the hearty welcome we had received, and the magnificent and interesting country around us. Our new companions, too, were eager to display the metal of their fine steeds, and their own skill in horsemanship; so, giving rein to our horses, we dashed across the slopes, and soon reached Bathanyeh. The distance from Hît is about an hour, but in less than half that time we accomplished it.

Bathanyeh, or Bathanîyeh, as it is sometimes called, is situated on the northern slope of the Jebel Haurân, commanding an extensive view to the north and north-west. About an hour below the town the gentle declivity termi-

nates in a plain, which stretches away to the lakes of Damascus and the Tellûl. About half an hour to the north-west are two little conical hills, beside which stand the large deserted villages of Ta'ala and Ta'alla, and beyond them, a little to the right, rises the lofty Tell Khaledîyeh, crowned with ruins. These ruins were referred to by the Druzes as extensive and beautiful, and we regretted much our inability to visit them. But we now saw that a month would be requisite to explore thoroughly the interesting remains of antiquity scattered through this mountain range alone. Deserted and partially ruined cities, with multitudes of inscriptions, were said to exist on their eastern declivities and along their base, extending far into the great plain. Time did not admit of our visiting these; but it is to be hoped that some enterprising traveller with time at command will ere long leave the beaten track of his predecessors on the west of the Jordan, and penetrate these unknown regions. From every place where we reached the boundary of our prescribed route I turned aside with regret; far away beyond it the eye rested on enticing ruins and unexplored towns and villages. From Bathanyeh I saw three in the plain, in addition to those above referred to; there were thus six interesting deserted towns within view in this direction alone, none of which were much over two hours distant, and all of them well worthy of a visit. On the south-east, about half an hour distant, are two lofty tells, which shut in the view in this direction.

Bathanyeh is not quite so extensive as Hît; but the buildings are of a superior style of workmanship, and in better preservation. On our arrival we observed the

circular openings of a subterranean aqueduct approaching the town from the heights above; and following it round the walls to the north-eastern side, we there dismounted, and, giving our horses in charge to some shepherds, we proceeded to examine the buildings. So far as I am aware, no traveller has ever before visited this ancient site, or even referred to its situation and importance as tending to identify the ancient province of *Batanæa*. On entering the town we first passed along a paved street to a large building, with a square tower some forty feet in height beside the entrance. The spacious gateway was shut by massive folding-doors of stone; but we threw them open with ease, and entered a large flagged court-yard, in part covered with ruins. Around this were the apartments, each opening into it by stone doors, thus resembling the plan of a modern Damascus mansion. On an inverted stone in the side of one of the chamber-doors is the following inscription, in good characters. It is probably defective at the commencement of each line:—

1. .....AYCOCIAYTΘVΘΕΟ//////////
.....POCΠAÇIΘEIVOVΘNE
.....NOCABIBOVANA
.....MOCΓAVTOVZOBE
.....ΔOCNATAMEΛOYΓH
.....CT////////IANEΓEIPAN
.....TOTVXIONEK (?)
.....TOTH//////////////

Having finished copying, I scrambled up over heaps of stones and tottering walls to the terraced roof of the building, which in most places is as sound as when first con-

structed; and from this commanding spot I took bearings of the various sites and prominent objects in view, and roughly sketched the general features of the whole surrounding country, to enable me afterwards to delineate it with more accuracy on a map. Mr. Barnett had gone to search for inscriptions, but had not been very successful. In a room with several crosses upon the walls he found the following—IHCΘ////TOVC—which is doubtless the date IHC, 218 of the Bostrian era, equivalent to A.D. 324. On a stone apparently once used as a grave-stone, but now lying among others, was the following, which states that Aeredus the son of Omaimos (an inhabitant of *Aoros?*) died, aged 55:—

2. AIPHΔ
ΟCOM
AIMOV
AΩPO
CET
ΩN
NE

Having finished my observations, I proceeded in search of my companions, now winding through narrow streets, and now climbing over half-ruined houses. I had thus a good opportunity of examining the character of the buildings and of tracing the lines of the streets. There are no public buildings of any extent or pretensions to architectural beauty standing; but there is evidence of comfort and wealth in almost all the private dwellings. Durability and simplicity appear to have been the only objects aimed at by these utilitarian architects; and they have succeeded so well that, though their land has been long deserted, and their city long forsaken, and though the name and the history of the former inhabitants have for centuries been forgotten and unknown, yet these mansions remain as their only memorials. I soon discovered my companions assembled at the foot of a lofty tower,

looking up at a tempting inscription beside one of the turret windows, but so high as to be illegible. Mr. Barnett suddenly left us, and was soon out of sight amid heaps of ruins. We had sufficient evidence of his progress, however, in the metallic sound of the basalt stones as he moved or displaced them with his feet. A few minutes afterwards a large slab was dislodged from the little window, and the head of our enthusiastic friend the next moment occupied its place within a few inches of the inscription. Letter after letter he traced with his finger while I acted as scribe. The following is the result of our labours :—

3. ΚΕΠΡΙCΚΟCΕΦ////////CTATO
VKEHΔÉΔP

ΑΓΑΘΗΤΥΧΗ	ΝΟV
ΑVΣΙΛΕΒΕΑΠΩ	ΚΩΜΕ
ΛΛΑΔΠΑΝΗΚΑΛ	CNA
ΗΤΩΝΠΙCΤΩΝΜΑΛ	XO
XOCKEQCHBEOYKE	Y.

AEITOCKENECTWPIC

At the base of the tower I observed a fragment of an inscription upon a loose stone, but it was so imperfect I did not stop to copy it. Near this I entered a small building of singular design, but beautiful workmanship. I first passed from the street into an open court through a stone door. In front of one of the chambers in this court is a little portico, or porch, supported on two columns, on which were figured numerous crosses. On the other side, opposite to this, a door led into a large apartment, and from

this a door about three feet six inches high opened into a long but narrow chamber or hall, between which and the former there was a range of openings in the wall, with stone troughs inserted in them, accessible from both sides. This was evidently a stable, and its admirable plan and costly fittings bear testimony to the wealth and taste of its ancient proprietor. On a stone in the interior wall of this building is an inscription in beautiful raised characters, but unfortunately we had not sufficient light to copy it. On the northern side of the town there is a large building, standing almost alone, which appears to have been in recent times used as a mosk. The floor is finely flagged, and the stone roof, now fallen, was supported on columns, whose capitals somewhat resemble the Ionic order. The whole structure was built of ancient materials.

Such is the situation and such the character and state of the buildings in Bathanyeh. There can be no doubt that we have here preserved in modern days the name of the Roman province of *Batanæa*, and the Syrian kingdom of BASHAN. It is quite true that both these ancient names were given to *provinces* or sections of country; but it is also true, as I shall show, that there was in that district an important *town* of the same name. At present there is a province called *Ard el-Bathanyeh*, "the country of Bathanyeh," embracing the whole of the mountain-chain called Jebel Haurân, with a section of the plain on the northern and eastern sides. This district is now *universally* called by the natives either Ard el-Bathanyeh or Jebel ed-Druze; the name Jebel Haurân is only applied to it by strangers. The central and southern sections of this range possess features of great beauty — graceful

mountains, bold precipices, deep ravines, and picturesque vales are seen at every point, and the greater portion is clothed with evergreen forests of oak. The northern slopes are, as I have stated, of a different character. Here the gentle declivities are only diversified with little naked, conical hills, but the extreme richness of the soil amply compensates for these defects. The extent and boundaries of both the modern and ancient province will be more fully described in the sequel, when I come to give a general view of Bashan and its provinces.

Batanæa is frequently mentioned by ancient writers as a province, but down to the Christian era we have no notice of a city of that name. In the 'Notitia Ecclesiastica,' however, published in the 'Geographia Sacra' of S. Paulo, Batanis (Βατανεως) is one of the thirty-four ecclesiastical cities of the province of Arabia, whose bishops were suffragans of the primate of Bostra,[5] and it can scarcely be doubted that Bathanyeh is the place there referred to. By the early Arabian geographers Bathanyeh is mentioned both as a city and a province,[6] but no details are given of it.

Turning away from these interesting remains, we rode across the fields in a direction a little east of south, towards a small conical hill, called Tell Azrân—our horses sinking to the pasterns in the rich black mould of the freshly ploughed ground. In a few minutes we came to a large section of smooth and firm turf, the sight of which was too tempting to allow our Druze companions to travel any

[5] Notitiæ Antiquæ, pp. 50, 61.

[6] Abulfedæ Tab. Syr. p. 97; and p. 15, note 67; and Addenda et Corrigenda, p. 97.

longer at an easy pace. The young sheikh Saîd was armed with a long spear, and his attendant Hassan carried a musket. The latter, suddenly striking his horse with the heavy stirrups, dashed away across the plain, occasionally turning in his saddle and brandishing his gun, as if defying those behind to pursue him. Saîd's eye kindled as he restrained his impatient steed, and a modest glance at us seemed to say that only a sense of his dignity as marching in our train prevented him from giving chace. Nikôla now gave rein to his horse, and in a few moments was close upon Hassan; Saîd immediately followed, and then Mr. —— joined in the sport. The scene now became very exciting, and I observed every plough in the fields around stopped, and the warlike Druzes, who held them, gazing with intense interest on our little party. The dexterity of the Druzes in the management of their horses, and their use of arms, is as well known as their undaunted courage in the battle-field. Hassan restrained his horse as Nikôla approached from behind, and yet seemed as if he were urging him on to greater speed in flight; but, watching his opportunity, he swerved to the right, and suddenly drew up as the other shot past, and then again as suddenly turned his horse across the flank of his antagonist, over whom his position now gave him full power with the sword. Nothing could exceed the quickness of the horse in these movements, and the admirable precision with which the feint was executed. The horses appeared to enter as much into the spirit of the sport as their masters—obeying every motion of the feet, or rein, or weapon—now wheeling round on the hind feet, now dashing out at full speed, and then stopping short and sudden in their career.

My own strong Arab, not over quiet at best, soon became almost unmanageable. He pranced and reared and champed the bit till the blood flowed from his mouth. Getting tired of holding him back, I loosed the rein and let him take his own course, and he soon carried me into the midst of the mêlée. After half an hour of such exercise as I had not indulged in for years, we all gradually cooled down, and, having surmounted a gentle swell on the eastern side of Tell Azrân, we came in sight of the ruins of *Shŭka*, the ancient *Saccœa*, and in a quarter of an hour more were beside them.

From Bathanyeh to Shŭka is about four miles. There is a gentle ascent as far as the Tell Azrân; but the remainder is level. In several places are traces of an ancient paved road. This town is built on the side of an extensive plateau which surmounts the slopes of Hît and Bathanyeh, and extends eastward as far as Juneineh, one hour distant, where it rises a little, and then runs on to Tell el-Mâ'az, an hour farther. Along its southern side is a broad elevated ridge, separating it from Wady Nimreh. On the south-west it declines gently toward Shŭhba. This plateau is unrivalled for the fertility of its soil and the fineness of its wheat.

A few hundred yards from Shŭka we came to a square tower of excellent masonry, similar in form and appearance to that seen at Hît. It measures nearly 20 feet on each side by 30 high. The door is toward the east, and above it is a small window. I attempted to enter; but the stench issuing from the interior prevented me, and on looking in I found that it was filled to the depth of several feet with human bones. I inquired in horror and amazement what this meant, as I well knew that such is not the

mode of burial practised by any of the inhabitants of Syria in the present day. Saîd replied that they were the remains of some of the soldiers of Ibrahîm Pasha, who perished in thousands on the borders of the Lejah during the former Druze war—some by the sword, but many more by fatigue, thirst, and famine. Here they have been gathered, as if to bear silent testimony to the strength of that great natural fortress, and to the success of its brave defenders. But other objects more inviting withdrew my attention from this melancholy and horrid spectacle. On a tablet over the doorway is a long Greek inscription, in small but well-formed characters, and on each side of it is another tablet, with inscriptions equally long. Finding we had not time to copy them all, we determined to take that on the left hand; but I have since found, greatly to my regret, that this is the very one Burckhardt copied, having no time for the others, like ourselves. It appears from this inscription that the mausoleum was erected by a certain *Bassos* for himself, his children, and his wife, and was completed in "the year of the city" 70. This is probably the Bostrian era, and consequently the date of the monument is A.D. 176.[7]

Immediately on entering Shŭka I climbed to the summit of a square tower, to gain a general view of the whole town and the surrounding country, and to take bearings of all the prominent objects in view. The ruins I estimated at about two miles in circuit. Few of the buildings are in a good state of preservation, but some of them exhibit marks of considerable taste and skill in architec-

[7] See Burckhardt's Travels in Syria, p. 76; and Ritter, Pal. und Syr. ii. 921, 922.

ture. The lines of most of the streets can be traced, though now encumbered with ruins; they are narrow, but straighter and more regular than those of Hît or Bathanyeh. I observed four square towers besides that referred to above, but they are of a different character, and perhaps of an older date. Descending from my elevated position, I walked eastward over immense heaps of fallen stones, the only remains of huge piles of building. I soon came to a large and imposing structure, and entered it over the broken wall behind. It was evidently at one time a church, and was divided by short clumsy piers, supporting semicircular arches, into nave and aisles. The nave is twenty-four feet wide, and the piers eight feet distant from each other. The aisles are each ten feet wide. The total length of the building is seventy-two feet, and the extreme breadth inside fifty-two feet. On passing out of the spacious door in front, I was no little surprised to observe the chasteness and beauty of the external decorations. The door has a deep moulded border all round, while over it is a richly ornamented cornice. On each side of it, ten feet from the ground, is a niche with shell top, and a pediment supported by four Ionic columns. Beyond these were two side-doors, and in the intervals brackets for statues. The upper part of the front, however, is flat and bare, but it is probable that it was originally covered by a portico. The contrast between the exterior and interior of this building is so great, that I at once concluded it had been originally erected for a temple, and was in after ages remodelled for Christian worship. It is rather singular that the door still remains in the eastern end.

From this building I proceeded over ruinous houses and narrow streets toward that part of the town now inhabited. The stones have here been cleared away from the centre of the streets, to form a path for animals, and similar paths have also been made through the rubbish that encumbers a few of the ancient courtyards. The present inhabitants, Druzes, have taken possession of such chambers as had their roofs and doors perfect, but I did not observe anywhere a new erection or even recent repairs; indeed, this would be quite unnecessary, for there are far more houses still habitable than there are people to occupy them. I found my companions surrounded by the village elders, with the sheikh at their head, and our old friend Mûsa was among them, having just arrived on a professional tour. After the customary salutations, accompanied in this instance by attempts to kiss my hand, the people renewed their pressing invitations for us to remain with them for the night. We pleaded, of course, our engagements at Shŭhba, and the importance of being there in time to meet the two great chiefs.

Mr. Barnett now went with me to examine the remains of two once fine buildings on the eastern side of the town. One of them is totally ruinous, with the exception of the front, but the other is nearly entire. Round the interior are niches and intervening brackets for statues, and on the front wall is a profusion of chaste ornaments. Near this place there is a fragment of an inscription on a large stone, from which it appears that one of these buildings was a church dedicated to the saints and martyrs George and Sergius, erected by "*Tiberinos* the Bishop in the year

263," corresponding to A.D. 369.[8] From this inscription we learn that this town was in very early ages the seat of a bishop; its name, however, does not appear in any of the ecclesiastical lists I have yet seen, nor has Ritter been able to identify it. Gesenius suggests that it may be the *Sogane*, Σωγανη, of Josephus; but for this there is not a shadow of evidence.[9] It is more probable that in early Christian times the ancient *Saccæa*, Σακκαια, of Ptolemy may have been rebuilt or adorned by some prefect, and called after the name of one of the emperors, perhaps *Constantine*, as was the case in so many other instances; and then, after the lapse of a few generations, the old name was resumed, and the new soon forgotten. There is a *Constantine*, Κωνσταντίνη, mentioned in the province of Arabia, in the list of ecclesiastical cities.[1]

Mr. Barnett copied another inscription from a stone in the side of an adjoining house, which is also found, though

[8] Col. Leake, the learned editor of Burckhardt's 'Travels in Syria,' has marked, in a note, this date as A.D. 263. It is certainly Ετους ΣΞΓ, but it must be by mere oversight that the A.D. is attached to it, since it is well known that the *Christian era* was not used till centuries after that period; and, besides, it was not till a century after this date that St. George was murdered at Alexandria. In fact, this inscription is important in a chronological point of view, as it proves that the Bostrian era is the one generally used on these inscriptions. George, the *Saint*, bishop of Alexandria, was killed by the mob during a revolt caused by his persecution of the heathen, in A.D. 361; as the Bostrian era commenced A.D. 106, this church was thus erected eight years after his death.

[9] Ritter, Palästina und Syrien, ii. 921, note. The town of Sogane, Josephus says, was in Upper Gaulanitis, and must have stood near to the banks of the waters of Merom (Bel. Jud. iv. 1). It appears, from a reference to it in his 'Life,' that it was not far distant from Seleucia. The statements of Josephus are altogether opposed to the suppositions of Gesenius. See Reland. Palæs. pp. 1120, 1121.

[1] S. Paolo, Geog. Sac. Not. Ant. p. 51.

imperfect, in Burckhardt.[2] It records the dedication of a church to St. Theodorus, by a certain *Elias*, on the 14th of the month April, in the year "of the city" (Bostra) 310, A.D. 416.[3] Two other inscriptions were copied by Burckhardt, but the ancient name of the city does not occur on any of them, nor are their dates given. There can scarcely be a doubt but that in these ruins we have all that now remains of the ancient city of *Saccæa*, mentioned by Ptolemy as situated in the eastern part of the province of *Batanæa*. The importance of the identification of this site, as tending to fix the position of the province of Batanæa, will be afterwards alluded to.

The topography of the north-eastern section of the ancient kingdom of Bashan has never hitherto been accurately described or delineated in maps. The nearest approach to truth is in the map attached to Burckhardt's 'Travels in Syria,' but even there the natural features are not given, and the positions of most of the villages are incorrectly laid down. The village of Hiyât, for example, which he calls *Heitt*, is represented as *east* of Hît, whereas it is nearly *west* of it. His villages *Bezeine* and *Bezeinat*, said to be south-east of Tell Khaledîyeh,[4] I nowhere heard of, and they certainly do not exist in the place he has assigned to them. Probably Bezeine may be a mistake for Bathanyeh. Berghaus' map is worse still than that of Burckhardt. That strange mania that possesses cartographers in general for putting down all names they may hear of, without any distinct data to determine their positions, seems to have been stronger in him than in most others. He extends the mountain-range far north-

[2] Trav. in Syria, p. 75. [3] Id. [4] Id. p. 217.

ward of Tell Mâ'az, and even beyond Tell Khaledîyeh, contrary to the express declaration of Burckhardt.[5] From Shŭka there is a gradual and easy descent northward to the plain, and Khaledîyeh stands about *three miles* out from the base of this declivity. But Berghaus has joined to these mountains on the north another range of great extent, which he designates "Djebel es-Szaffa," and along its eastern border he has laid down four ruined cities, and at a convenient spot near them *Bab es-Szaffa*, "the gate of the Szaffa." I cannot tell how he determined the positions of these places, but I presume the brief note to Appendix No. VI. of Burckhardt's 'Travels in Syria' is his authority. It is enough to say here that the note is incorrect. There are no mountains north of the Jebel Haurân, the whole country being an unbroken plain to the Lake Hîjâneh and to the Tellûl eastward of it; and besides, there is no mountain-range whatever in the *Săfă*, —it is a rocky plain, with a single lofty tell in the middle of it. The position and features of this singular district I have already described, in connection with my journey to the lakes of Damascus, and I there observed that all my observations and inquiries in this place tended to confirm the information I had previously obtained at Hîjâneh.

At 2·40 we again mounted and rode over a rocky swell into the fertile plain, through which we dashed at a hard gallop towards Shŭhba, now visible on the summit of a rugged ridge. Our course was first through fresh-ploughed fields till we reached the regular path. Here

[5] Trav. in Syria, p. 77. Burckhardt says that Tell Mâ'az is the N.E. limit of the mountain; and at p. 217 he states that Tell Khaledîyeh is *in the plain*.

again are traces of an ancient road. After riding about two miles we saw on the ridge of the mountains, two hours' distant on the left, a ruin resembling a castle—our attendants had forgotten its name, but pointed out, on a conical peak below it, the village of *Tufhah;* and they informed us that in the wady, half an hour farther east, is Nimreh. A deep and wild ravine commences a little eastward of the latter place, and runs in a western direction past Tufhah to Shŭhba. We could now clearly see its course beyond the swelling ground on our left hand, and from Shŭhba I ascertained its true direction. This ravine divides the acclivities of Hît, Bathanyeh, and Juneineh, from the lofty mountains on the south. The main chain rises up abrupt and rugged on its southern bank, and the scenery here becomes bolder and more picturesque, the hill-sides and wild glens between being generally clothed with forests of evergreen oak.

Half-way between Shŭka and Shŭhba we passed on our right a small deserted village called Deir esh-Sh'aîr, which is probably that mentioned by Burckhardt under the name *Asalte.* On leaving it we crossed a shallow wady, and then, after riding over a broad swell of fine land, reached the brow of the great ravine above alluded to. This ravine, from its commencement to this place, is called Wady Nimreh, but throughout the whole of its subsequent course along the side of the Lejah to Burâk, and thence through the plain to the lake Hîjâneh, it receives the general name of Wady el-Liwa.

Crossing the ravine, we reached Shŭhba, situated on its southern bank. The distance of this place from Shŭka is eight miles and a half, but we accomplished it in an hour

and three-quarters. We scrambled over the ruined wall beside a fine Roman gate, and, after watering our horses at a large tank, partly filled with muddy water, we proceeded along a well-paved ancient street to the residence of the sheikh. Here we found a large concourse of people, but the first to hold out the hand of welcome was our kind host of the previous night, Sheikh Ass'ad. He soon introduced us to his brother Fâres, who had advanced to receive us, and we were afterwards ushered into an apartment where we found comfort, smiling faces, and a hearty welcome.

Sheikh Fâres bears a striking resemblance to his brother in manner, features, and figure, but there is a little more of sternness in his expression. He is now the most powerful chief in the Haurân—that is, he is able to bring the greatest number of followers into the field. He took an active part in the late war, and lost a fine mare at the battle of Ghubâghib. She was struck on the neck by a musket-ball, and fell; her master left her for dead upon the plain, but she afterwards recovered and was claimed by one of the Turkish officers, who sold her to Khurshîd Pasha, General Guyon, with whom I frequently saw her. After coffee was served, as the Druzes do not smoke, most of the strangers withdrew, knowing that the room we occupied belonged to the harîm, and had been specially prepared for our use. The conversation now turned upon the war, and it was soon evident that these sheikhs thought we had some political object in view in our present journey. I evaded the direct inquiries that were addressed to me as to the intentions of the government, of which I had had private information before leaving

Damascus; and I merely expressed my opinion that the Sultan would not insist on the conscription, but would probably accept an equivalent. They expressed their willingness to give any reasonable equivalent, and then, in strong and even pathetic language, stated their case fully, and appealed to me whether the government could reasonably ask soldiers. "We are here," said Fâres, "on the borders of the desert, and are compelled to wage an unceasing warfare with the Bedawîn, to protect our wives, our children, and our property. No regular troops ever come near us; no garrison is maintained in any border town, or castle, to keep the tribes of the desert in check; the produce of our fields we are constantly forced to send to the city under an armed escort; and if they take away our sons, and send them into other countries, how are we to protect our homes?" They also said that they had no interest in the soil they cultivated, and that they were but slaves cultivating land the property of others, and paying their masters all their hard-earned profits, while nothing was done either to defend or encourage them in their labours. "We cannot possibly be worse than we now are." He concluded—"It is because no others can live here that we are tolerated. Let the Sultan give us the protection of his armies; let him defend us from the constant forays of the Bedawîn; let him give us an interest in the land we till, that we may have some place we can call home, and that we may be able to plant vineyards, and olive-groves, and orchards, like our brethren in Lebanon—and then we will do as others do." I well knew that this is not the true cause of the Druzes' refusing to give conscripts; but that it arises from the free and

independent spirit that seems inherent in them all, and from the dread of anything like restraint—but who could answer such arguments as these? Who could say to them Go, and with the blood of your children defend the throne of your sovereign, and leave your homes to be ravaged, and your brethren slain, by fierce marauders, while your sovereign has not the will to protect you? It is contrary to human nature to defend that in which we have no interest, and to leave our homes a prey to the spoiler while we fight the battles of others. This truth applies in its full force to the Druzes of the Haurân; and the true policy of the government would now be to organize them into an irregular corps for guarding the frontiers of this section of country, and to accept this in lieu of service in the regular army. But the Turks, with their customary recklessness, have plunged into a difficulty, out of which they will try in vain to release themselves with honour. They have sent an army to compel the Druzes to submit to the conscription, and that army, ill equipped and worse commanded, has been forced to withdraw in disgrace; and now, through the intervention of strangers, they desire a compromise. They will be compelled, in the end, to concede all they contended for at first; and concession will come with a bad grace when the terms are dictated by conquerors. It is impossible that the Turkish army, as it at present exists in Syria, can conquer the Haurân; or, even should the province submit, it would be impossible for the army to retain it. A great part of the country is impracticable for cavalry and artillery, while it affords every facility to skirmishers, and precludes the possibility of acting with large bodies of the

line. During the winter troops cannot live in it without good barracks, and during the summer they are enervated by heat and scarcity of water. To subdue and retain the Haurân it will be necessary to establish several strong and active garrisons in well-appointed fortresses, and then to construct military roads through the wildest districts: were this done, the country would soon become the granary and the garden of Syria.[6]

The noise and bustle of dinner broke up the discussions on polities; and if the honour done us is to be measured by the profusion of the dainties, we ought certainly to entertain a very high sense of it. Three sheep had been slain, and one of them, roasted entire, graced the centre; while the fragments of the others, with huge piles of rice and little dishes of delicacies, radiated round. Sheikh Ass'ad, at our invitation, joined us, and seemed highly pleased at this monster banquet. Relay after relay of villagers, strangers, and retainers did ample justice to our host's munificence, and, among others, we observed our friend from Palmyra, who now appeared in a new character. He had come here to buy corn, but his money, 7000 piastres, had been stolen by the way, and he did not know what to do. Corn he must have, and the compassionate Sheikh Fâres was willing to aid him. In fact, the shrewd Druze chief seemed to treat the affair of the lost money as a fabrication. He did not tell him so,

[6] The aspect of affairs has greatly changed since these words were penned; but I do not consider it necessary to change a syllable of what I have written. The Druzes have now for nearly two years been quiet, but this quietness arises from the very weakness of the government. The Pasha of Damascus has not power enough to sting them to rebellion by any new demand; and they, besides, are obtaining unusually large prices for their wheat in the market.

for that would have been contrary to the rules of hospitality; but he proposed to barter his corn for a part of the other's camels, which he suggested would not now be needed. The bargain was not closed, and, somehow or other, the missing money appeared next morning.

February 3rd.—The earliest dawn found us ready for a more minute examination of the interesting ruins of which we had obtained but a glance on the previous day. Our time was limited, and we resolved to use it to the best advantage. Taking a guide, we sallied out through droves of camels and donkeys and crowds of men. Passing over immense heaps of hewn stones, mingled with broken columns and fragments of richly-ornamented cornices, we arrived first at a large and curious building, and to reach it we descended into the court of a house nearly fifteen feet below the level of the surface, so deep are the masses of ruins; and here we found ancient pavement, and a large chamber with its stone door and roof complete. Over our heads now towered a lofty curved wall of solid masonry without an opening. We followed it round till we reached the front, which is towards the east. This was originally entirely open, the walls that encompassed the other sides terminating abruptly, like the *antæ* of a temple. A modern wall is thrown across it, and within several families reside. In the centre of the building is a semicircular apse 14 feet wide, and on each side of it a niche for a statue. The total breadth of the building is 27 yards, and the depth about 20. In front of it is a large open space; this was probably a circus, but it is now so much encumbered with ruins that we could not ascertain whether there are still any remains of seats. Along its

northern side runs one of the great streets of the city, the pavement of which still remains entire. This street, opposite to the building, has been excavated deeply in the solid rock, and is arched over; this was evidently done to obtain a more gentle ascent.

On the south side of the open space alluded to are the remains of a temple fronting the east. The main doorway is walled up, but I obtained admission to the curious crypt underneath it, where there are several ranges of heavy short piers supporting the vaulted roof. The principal apartment was over this, but it is now ruinous. I was anxious to examine the details of this singular structure, but it was so crowded with goats and so filthy and noisome that I was glad to effect my escape. On the northern wall are two brackets for statues, with inscriptions, but they are so much broken that they are illegible.

Leaving this, we crossed a rough rising ground, and came suddenly upon one of the most interesting remains in the city—a fine theatre in a tolerably good state of preservation, of which I was enabled to form a plan. The exterior walls are nearly perfect. These form first a semicircle, and then the sides are prolonged some distance in parallel lines. In front are three main entrances to the *porticus*, and two smaller ones near the angles, and from the *porticus* three spacious doors open upon the *arena*. The *porticus* is carried round the angles and a few yards along the sides; and two doors open from these sections of it, passing underneath the seats to the *arena*. The arena is 15 yards wide and the same in depth, while around it are seven rows of seats, and then a passage, or *præcinctio*, 7 feet broad and 54 yards from wall to wall.

Behind this was a solid wall 6 feet high, over which were seven rows of benches. From the *præcinctio* four arched passages lead out, underneath the upper benches, to a corridor which extends round the semicircle, and from this nine doorways opened to the outside. The theatre being built upon sloping ground, the corridor behind, though on a level with the præcinctio, is not elevated above the ground without. The extreme length of the building is 35 yards and the breadth 40.[7]

I had just completed my measursements, when a messenger from the sheikh arrived to summon us to breakfast. The morning's walk had whetted my appetite, and yet I turned away with regret from the examination of those interesting remains of a more prosperous age. As we went toward the sheikh's house by a narrow path among heaps of ruins, I noticed upon a small stone, high up in a square turret, a piece of good sculpture in *alto-relievo*. It represents a deity seated upon a throne, with an altar before him; a priest stands in front, preparing to sacrifice an ox, while a man approaches from behind with a garland-crown, and is followed by another leading an animal for an offering.

At breakfast we arranged with our host for a Druze guide to accompany us throughout our whole excursion in the Haurân; and to return with us, if necessary, to Damascus. We then left our servants to make the necessary arrangements for mules, and again set out to complete our survey of the ruins.

Having left the sheikh's house, and entered the main

[7] This theatre is mentioned by Burckhardt, 'Travels in Syria,' pp. 72, 73; and by Buckingham, 'Travels among the Arab Tribes,' p. 260.

street, we turned northward along a side street, but, after proceeding a short distance, we perceived that no ruins of any importance lay in this direction; we consequently turned back, and went along the street eastward. We passed through the arches already referred to, and now observed little recesses, like stalls, on each side. Burckhardt supposes these were tombs, but the side of one of the most public thoroughfares does not seem a very suitable place for the burial of the dead. Near these, on the end of a building, are two brackets for statues, with fragments of inscriptions, which Burckhardt has copied. They contained the name of a certain governor of Mesopotamia, but it has been defaced in them both; there is no date. We were now led off to the left about 50 yards, and taken down to a low ancient courtyard, where we found over a door a beautiful Greek inscription, from which we learn that, in the reign of M. Aurelius Antoninus and his son L. Aurelius Verus, a monument was erected to the magistrate *Martius*, by the general of the 16th legion, then stationed in Syria. There is no date, but it must have been constructed between A.D. 161 and 180. In front of this, in an open space, is a modern mosk in ruins, and within it two columns of grey granite about 12 feet long.

Continuing our course along the street eastward, we soon came to the remains of a temple, with a portico of six columns, five of which are standing complete; they have brackets for statues similar to those in the great colonnade at Palmyra. The architecture is Corinthian, and the details executed with taste and skill. This temple faces the south; and opposite it, on the other side of the street,

was another building apparently similar in design, but it is now so covered over with ruins and comparatively modern walls, that it is impossible to ascertain its extent and plan. The interior was at one time fitted up as a church, with a dome supported upon pillars and arches. Not far below this are three cubical structures of solid masonry, each at present 10 feet high and 17 square. There were originally four of them, and they stood in the centre of the city, forming a square whose sides faced the four cardinal points. From between these ran four straight streets, each 25 feet wide, to the four great gates of the city. The pavement of these streets still remains in many places quite perfect, and is a beautiful specimen of Roman work. From the top of one of the cubical structures I obtained a good view over the eastern and southern divisions of the city, and seldom have I seen such a confused expanse of ruins; it seems as if some destroying angel had swept over it, laying prostrate every building in his progress. As the whole city was constructed of stones, the ground is now completely covered with shapeless heaps, through which the lines of the streets may be seen as broad furrows intersecting each other at right angles. The main streets to the east and south are, in a great measure, free of stones; and they now present a singular aspect running straight and smooth through the wilderness of ruins, and terminating at five triple gateways still almost perfect.

We proceeded southward to a large bath, situated 110 yards from the central towers. The walls of this building are of immense strength, and contain pipes apparently intended to let the water down from some cistern constructed in the upper story. The chambers were spacious

and lofty, with vaulted roofs. Close to it, on the south, are the ruins of an aqueduct, carried along on arches nearly forty feet high. Ascending to the summit of the bath by a staircase, I was able to trace the piers of the aqueduct across the ruins to the south-east angle of the city, and thence along the southern bank of the wady Nimreh for a considerable distance. It is said to have originally brought the water from a fountain a little east of Nimreh, and must consequently have been upwards of ten miles in length.

From this commanding height I endeavoured to obtain a general and distinct idea of the form and extent of this ancient city; or at least of that portion of it which was enclosed within the walls, and I sketched a plan of the whole. The city is nearly square, with a little inequality in the line of the wall on the western side caused by a deep ravine. The breadth from north to south I estimated at 800 yards, and the length is about 1000. Burckhardt states that there are *eight* gates, but I could only see traces of five; two on the south, and one on each of the other sides. The whole city appears to have been built with great regularity, all the principal streets intersecting each other at right angles. The ground on which it is built is rocky and uneven, sloping gradually up from the brow of the wady on the east, to the sheikh's house which stands on the top of the ridge; and then there is a slight declivity to the brow of another wady, shallow but rugged, along which the wall runs. Beyond the latter wady rise abruptly the two lofty tells el-Ghurârah and Shŭhba.

From this place we made our way back to the sheikh's house, and, selecting an intelligent guide, ascended to the summit of Tell Shŭhba. The ascent, though not long,

was difficult and toilsome, owing to the deep coating of small black stones, intermixed with porous lava and light tinkling cinders, with which the whole hill-side is covered. Our attention was attracted at once by these strange geological features, and we felt persuaded that there must be an extinct crater near, and on reaching the summit we found ourselves standing on the brink of it. On the western side of the tell is the large, deep, bowl-shaped cavity, with the jagged upheaved rocks forming a rim all round, and the whole exterior and interior coated with the *débris* of former eruptions. I had seen several craters before, but none so distinctly marked as this. South by east of this hill is Tell Ghurârah, a few hundred yards distant—so called because it resembles a *Ghurârah*, or "heap of wheat." A line of tells, or rather a rugged ridge, stretches away to the north, terminated by the lofty conical hill called Tell Sheihân, surmounted by a white wely. Beyond this, and away to the westward, is the broad expanse of the Lejah; a sea of rocks, whose surface is only variegated by the two solitary peaks of Tell Amâra and Tell Sumeid. The whole country on the west and south to the base of the mountains is stony, the Lejah here approaching the foot of the line of tells, and the plain southward of it being almost as rugged as the Lejah itself. On the south-east are the mountains with a gentle acclivity, but rugged and deeply furrowed by winter torrents. The loose stones along the slopes have been everywhere collected into heaps and built up in the walls of terraces, and there is evidence to show that the whole was once covered with vineyards.

There are fewer remains of remote antiquity in this city

thin in most of the others in the Jebel Haurân. The stone doors and roofs are found, but not in such numbers as in Hît, Bathanyeh, or Shûka; and I did not see a single example of a stone door on any house or temple of Roman origin. The city, in fact, seems to have been almost completely rebuilt by the Romans shortly after this province fell into their power and Bostra was made the capital. One inscription containing a date has already been given, and shows that the structure to which it belonged was erected between the years A.D. 161 and 180. Mr. Barnett discovered another, which I here insert, as it appears to have escaped the notice of those who have preceded me. It was found in a building near the centre of the ruins:—

ΥΠΕΡCΩΤΗΡΙΑCΤΩΝΚΥΡΙ
ΩΝΜΙΟΥΛΙΩΝΦΙΛΙΠΠΩΝCΕΒ
ΜΑΛΧΟΥΚΑΙΑΜΩΝΙCΚΕΑΛΕΞΑΝ
ΔΡΟΥΒΟΥΛ—ΡΟΕΔΡΙΑΜΑΡΡΙ
ΝΟΥΕΤΟΥCΠΡΩΤΟΥΤΗCΠΟΛΕΩC

This inscription, being of the time of the two Philips, must be dated between A.D. 246 and 249. There is another inscription referred to by Ritter,[8] from which some have conjectured that this city is the ancient *Lydia* of Ptolemy;[9] but according to Ptolemy that place was in Arabia Petræa, *south* of Bostra. Gesenius ventures another supposition concerning the name of this city, and upon grounds as unsatisfactory as the former.[1] He says that this is probably the *Dionysia* of the 'Notitia Ecclesiastica;' but the strongest proof he can bring forward in favour of the theory

[8] Palästina und Syrien, ii. p. 882. [9] Ptol. Geog. v. 17.
[1] Ritter, Palä̈s. und Syr. ii. p. 883.

is, that Dionysius was the patron god of theatres, and there is a theatre here. I may be permitted to add another argument of a similar character and of about equal weight. Dionysius is well known to have been the god of wine—the patron and promoter of the cultivation of the vine.[2] He travelled through the whole of the known world in the prosecution of his favourite object. Among other nations Syria was not overlooked; and though Damascus refused to receive either him or his vines, and was flayed alive in consequence,[3] yet he may have met with better success in this region, and probably this city may have been called after him. There can be no doubt that the vine was cultivated around Shŭhba to a great extent. *Dionysias*, Διονυσιας, was among the ecclesiastical cities in the province of Arabia, under the metropolitan of Bostra.[4] Nothing more, however, is known of it.

It is singular that we possess no historic record of a city of such extent, and whose buildings were so costly, and displayed so much of architectural skill and taste. It is just one of the many in this interesting district which have come down to us without a name or a story. A diligent search amid its wide-spread ruins might yet bring to light its name on some inscribed tablet; and it is to be hoped that some enterprising traveller, with the means and the time at command, will ere long undertake the thorough examination of the ruined and deserted cities of Bashan.

This city has been celebrated in the history of this country under Mohammedan rule as having been for a

[2] Euripid. *Bacch.* [3] Id. et Strab. Geog. xv. pp. 472, 473.
[4] S. Paulo, Geog. Sac. p. 497, and Not. Ecc. p. 50. Reland. Palest. p. 218.

considerable time the residence of the princely family of *Shĕhâb*, from whom it received its present name of *Shŭhba*. This family, which has for many years been one of the most celebrated in Syria, derives its origin from the ancient tribe of the *Koreish*, and its members thus claim relationship with the *Prophet*. One of their ancestors emigrated about the seventh century from the southern shores of Arabia, and took up his residence in this town. There his descendants remained, with their property and dependents, till the twelfth century, when, during the wars of Nûr ed-Dîn and Saladin, they resolved to escape from their adopted city, where they were exposed to the depredations of the contending parties, and to take up their abode amid the fastnesses of Libanus. They consequently set out in regular order; but in passing up Wady et-Teim, near Hasbeiya, they were attacked by the Frank garrison of that stronghold, and, having signally defeated them, took possession of the castle, and have ever since retained it. The present Emîr, Saïd ed-Dîn, of Hasbeiya, is the head of the house; the Emîr Effendi, of Rasheiya, is another scion of it; and the celebrated Emîr Beshîr Shehâb, so long the governor of Lebanon, was a junior member of the same family.

Everything being now arranged for continuing our route, we set out, accompanied by our new muleteer Yûsef, a Christian from Lebanon, and our servants, well mounted upon strong mules, which had been captured by our host, Sheikh Fâres, during the late war. Passing over the ruined wall, here almost completely prostrate, near the site of the west gate, we turned to the left along its side, and then descended by a difficult and rocky path into the ravine at

the south-west angle of the city. We now followed the line of an ancient road between Tell Ghurârah and the mountains, in a course a little west of south, about twenty minutes from the plain. The basalt rock here crops up every few yards, in sharp points and jagged ridges, over the soil; and broken fragments are also lying loosely, but these latter have been carefully collected into heaps, and built up in the walls of terraces. The soil between the rocks is deep and rich; and the whole slopes seem admirably adapted for the cultivation of the vine and the olive. Now, however, there is not a tree to be seen planted by man. In forty minutes we reached a shallow rocky glen, in which, a few minutes on our left, we saw the ancient village of *Murdŭk;* and a little north of it, on the summit of a ridge, a white-domed wely. Our attention was particularly attracted to this place by a large procession of women, whose veils of spotless white hung gracefully from the tall *tantûrs*, or "horns." They were walking from a clump of new-made graves toward the village, singing a wild and mournful chant as they went along. I inquired of Yûsef the meaning of this strange procedure. He replied that eleven of the men of Murdŭk had fallen in the late war, and that now the women of Shŭhba had come to mourn with the widows of the slain. There was something in this scene deeply affecting. The simple recital of Yûsef, the half-ruined look of the village, the solitude of the little valley, the fresh graves, and the train of mourners clad in white slowly winding among the rocks toward their deserted homes—these things combined acted strongly on my feelings, perhaps because they brought back the memory of sore bereavements.

In twenty minutes more we entered another little wady called Ishâmeh; and soon afterwards, on ascending its south bank, came in sight of a little village of the same name, about a quarter of an hour on our left. On our right about half a mile we saw Deir el-Leben, and beyond it Rîmeh, called, by way of distinction, Rîmet el-Luhf. At the village of Deir el-Leben ("The convent of the milk"), are the ruins of a large convent, with cells and cloisters. Here Burckhardt found a Greek inscription over the door of one of the cells, from which we learn that a temple of the sun had formerly occupied the spot. It was erected by two men, *Cassius Malichathos*, of the village of *Rîmea*, Ρειμεας; and Paulos Maximinus, of the village of *Mardocho*, Μαρδοχω. In these names we recognise at once the neighbouring villages of *Rîmeh* and *Murdŭk*.

In 1 h. 35 min. from Shŭhba we reached the ruined town of Suleim, situated on a low tell on the border of the plain. As soon as we halted I ascended to the top of the first building we came to—a beautiful temple—and there had time and opportunity to examine the country and take bearings. Westward the view embraced the whole plain of the Haurân and the Lejah, with a portion of Jaulân and Jedûr, to Jebel el-Heish and Hermon. On the north-east Tell Sheihân formed a prominent object, its smooth conical peak rising over the undulating intervening ground. Farther to the east were the stony declivities of the mountains; and from this place a deep wady runs up into them, with terraced sides, and the heights above clothed with forests of oak.

The town of Suleim is about a mile and a half in cir-

cumference, and contains the remains of some large and important buildings; but most of them are now mere heaps of ruin. The structure on the top of which I stood is one of great beauty. It is some distance from the town, on the north side. It had a small portico of two columns between *antæ*, supporting a finely-sculptured pediment, now lying in confused heaps on the ground in front. The whole interior must have been profusely decorated, as it is completely filled with large blocks covered with bas-reliefs of flowers and fruit, with wreaths of vine. In later ages it had been fitted up as a church, in a similar manner to the building already described in Shŭka. On a large stone in front of the building Mr. Barnett discovered a long Greek inscription, which had hitherto escaped the notice of the few travellers who have visited this region. When first observed it was almost concealed underneath other huge blocks; but, thanks to the assistance of a few athletic young Druzes, it was soon sufficiently exposed to be easily copied. The letters, however, were small, and in some places almost obliterated. The last line is important as containing the name of the town; it is as follows:—

ΕΝΕΑΔΟΣΝΕΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣΟΙΚΟΔΟΜΗΣΕΝΕΥΤΥΧ.[5]

[5] Mr. Hogg, in the little work above referred to, has given a learned comment on this inscription. He considers it to have been intended for a tomb built in the form of a small temple. This, I think, is very probable. The form and character of the structure plainly shows that it was a sacred edifice, and not an hostel or hospice, as some have conjectured. The first six lines are hexameters, and the last line, which is given above, is prose, and to this effect—"Eneadus the Neapolitan erected (this structure) fortunately." I cannot agree with Mr. Hogg that "this Neapolis is probably Shechem in Samaria," now called Nâblus. It is scarcely to be supposed that a town of such importance would not possess a builder of sufficient eminence to construct this temple; and it is still less probable that a stranger would be preferred

The first word should evidently be read Ενεαδος, and this Eneas was a *Neapolitan* or inhabitant of *Neapolis*. Now there was an ecclesiastical city of this name in the province of Arabia, which is always mentioned in connexion with Canatha, Dionysia, and others in this district; I think, therefore, *Suleim* may be identified with *Neapolis*. As is the case in many other places, such as Baniâs and Bâ'albek, the ancient name has been resumed and the new one forgotten; so that now, instead of the Greek Heliopolis, Cæsarea, and Neapolis, we have the original Bâ'albek, Baniâs, and Suleim. The Bishop of Neapolis was present in the Council of Chalcedon, and also in the Council of Constantinople.[6] This city is to be distinguished from another of the same name in the province of *Palæstina Prima*, and under the Patriarchate of Jerusalem;[7] at present called Nâblus, and well known as the Shechem of the Bible.

While Mr. Barnett was engaged in copying this inscription, we wandered through the town. We first visited the remains of extensive baths, and near them the foundations of a temple, standing on an elevated platform, which had once a small portico. After some time spent in climbing over heaps of ruins, now mere confused masses, we reached the house of the Sheikh, and were received with much courtesy, though it was evident there was some restraint in his manner, owing, no doubt, to his being ignorant of who we were and what was our object. He

to a native. I see no reason to change or modify my remarks on the identity of this town.

[6] S. Paulo Geog. Sac. p. 296, and Not. Eccl. p. 50. Reland. Palest. 217.

[7] S. Paul. Geog. Sac. 306.

pressed us to enter his house and take coffee, and said he had sent his brother to invite us; but we expressed our regret that we were in such haste to reach Kŭnawât that we could not possibly stop. I noticed beside his house a short Greek inscription upon a tablet, but did not copy it; and I also saw several others in various parts of the ruins mutilated and illegible. On returning to the temple we found that our Druze guide had arrived from Shŭhba, having waited for letters. We had now another ordeal of invitations to pass through from the Sheikh's brother, who, having heard a satisfactory report of us from our guide, used every effort to persuade us to remain, at least for a time. While Nikôla replied and apologized, and expressed regret and deep sorrow, &c. &c., with all Arab formality, we examined some large and curious caverns in front of the temple. They are about 30 feet deep, and the roof is supported by strong arches, the walls being in some places the natural rock, and in others built up of roughly hewn stones. They extend a considerable way underneath the surface. They may have been intended for tanks, or more probably for grain-stores in times of danger. We had seen similar but smaller ones at Hît and Bathanyeh. All the ancient writers who describe this country speak of the great caverns with which it abounds;[8] but of these more will be said in the sequel.

At 2·25 we mounted our horses and rode off amid the *salâms* of a large crowd of Druzes who had collected round us. We were led by our new guide *Mahmûd*, an athletic and determined-looking Druze. His dress was not that usually worn by his sect, as, instead of the ample white

[8] Strabo. Geog. xvi. p. 520.

turban, he wore the *kefiyeh* and *ageil* of the Arabs. He was armed with sword and pistols, but had neither spear nor gun, and rode a splendid grey charger. He seemed a morose and silent man, little inclined for conversation, but always answering questions distinctly, though briefly. I soon found that I could rely implicitly on the correctness of his answers, as he unhesitatingly acknowledged ignorance of towns and localities which he had not himself previously visited. Our road led us up the easy slope of the mountain towards Kunawât. At first we rode along the side of a little valley, and then turned over the ridge on its south bank and descended diagonally to Wâdy Kunawât; through which runs a considerable stream, the first we had seen since we left the 'Awaj. From the height above this wady we saw the ruined town of 'Atîl, a mile and a half distant on our right, surrounded by forests of oak. It lies on the straight road leading from Suleim to Suweideh.

Along the side of our path there were distinct traces of a Roman road, the pavement in some places remaining entire. We observed it at various points between Suleim and Kunawât. The scenery here becomes picturesque and beautiful. The mountains have bolder features, and the valleys and ravines are clothed with evergreen forests, while the grey ruins of towns and villages appear on every side. The whole declivity on which Kunawât stands is covered with ruins for miles. Clumps of tapering columns, towers and tombs, round and square, and heavy masses of masonry, crumbling but not fallen, are grouped together in great variety amid the dense foliage.

After crossing the stream we rode for some ten minutes along its left bank, and I then noticed a large building

occupying a prominent site on our left, on the south side of the wady. I remembered that Burckhardt had mentioned a place which he did not visit, near the head of the river, where he was informed were many statues. It occurred to me that this might probably be the spot, and, having told my companions so, we agreed to send our servants direct to the city, while we turned aside with Mahmûd to visit the ruin. After fifteen minutes' winding through tangled thickets and up a steep bank, we reached the gate of the building. This is a vast quadrangular structure, encompassed by a lofty wall of fine masonry. Round the whole interior were cloisters, supported in front by a range of handsome columns, those at the corners being heart-shaped. On the north side was a large projection, containing the ruins of a church; but the interior fittings of this building are of a much later date than the external walls. In the centre of the quadrangle are foundations of massive hewn stones; but the whole is now so much overgrown by the oak and other trees, that I found it impossible to ascertain its extent. The building is called *Deir es-Sumeid*, "the convent of Sumeid;" and it may probably have been used as a convent in Christian times, but it was originally intended for some other purpose. The doorway is surrounded with beautifully executed wreaths, intermixed with bunches of grapes in bold relief. On a stone in front of it, now in part buried in the earth and wedged between the roots of oak-trees, is a Greek inscription in finely-formed raised characters. We tried in vain to exhume it; but after all our labour we could only get at the following letters, the remainder being under the soil:—

ΗΕΟΡΤΗΤΩ -------
ΟΑΔΗΝΩΝΑ ----
ΤΑΙΤΩΘΕΩΛΩ ----

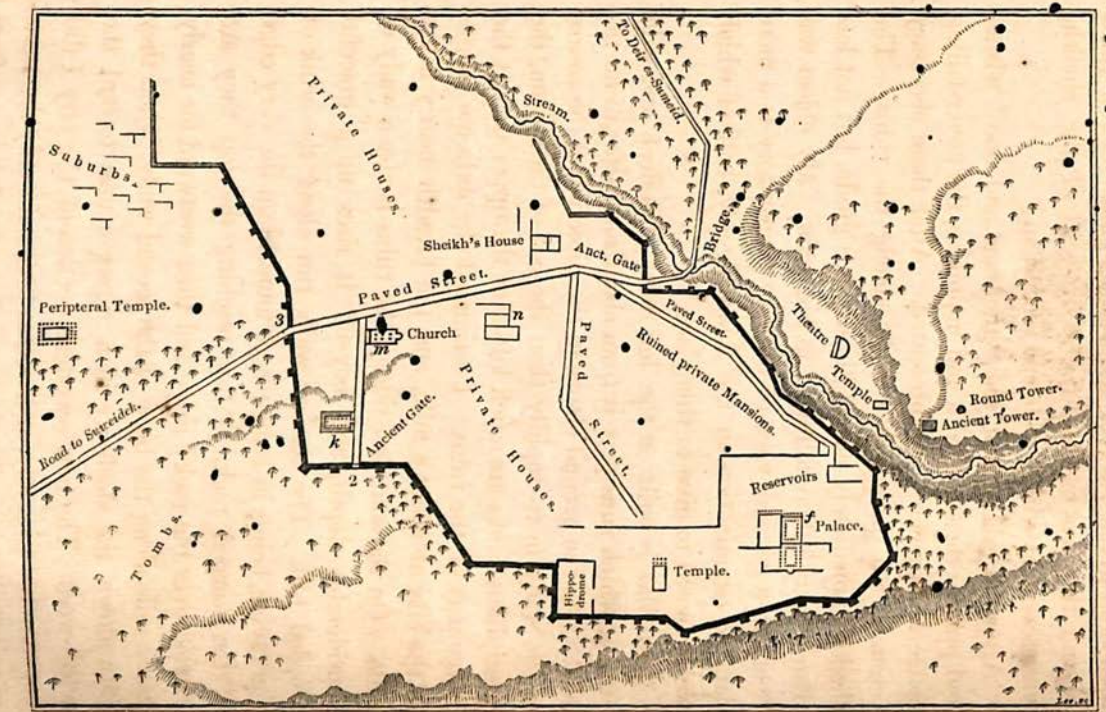
In our approach to this building we did not see a single living creature, and we were ourselves almost completely hid by the thickets; but we had only been a few minutes engaged in our examination when several Arabs, with long guns, were seen peeping over a large cairn some distance in front of the ruins. We took no notice of their movements, but continued our search for the statues; and after ascertaining that this could not be the place Burckhardt had heard of, or at least, if it were, that the statues had disappeared, Mr. Barnett and I returned to our horses. Some of the party who had reached the gate sooner than the others wished to ride off alone; but Mahmûd, pointing to the suspicious group of hungry-looking faces, now numbering ten or twelve, quietly observed that we had better *all* ride with him. In fact, it was only the presence of this single Druze, and the well-known courage of his race, that saved us from an attack on the spot. To attempt defence in such a place would be madness, for hundreds could lie concealed behind the oak-trees and take deadly aim. Not one of these fellows saluted us as we rode past them. They looked at us with scowling faces, no doubt cursing the necessity that kept their hands off us.

From Deir es-Sumeid there are traces of a good paved road to Kunawât. The present path runs near it, winding among the trees. In twenty minutes we reached the side of the deep ravine on the southern bank of which the city is built, and, crossing it by a modern bridge, we rode

up a well-paved road to the ruined gate. A few yards beyond this we entered the court-yard of the sheikh, where we met with a welcome reception.

After the salâms and the "thousand and one" wishes and prayers for our health and happiness, the never-failing coffee was prepared and presented. After these necessary ceremonies I proposed a walk among the ruins. The sheikh immediately offered himself as a guide, but not less than twenty others followed in his train. My object was to obtain a general view of the city preparatory to a more detailed examination on the following day, half of which we purposed to give to this place.

Kunawât is built on the left bank of a deep and wild ravine, which runs past it from about south-east to north-west. As the ground slopes in the direction of the course of the wady more rapidly than the bed of the stream, the precipitous banks are much loftier at the upper than at the lower part of the ruins. I estimated the extreme length of the city at about a mile, and the breadth nearly half a mile. On the southern side of the ruins is also a wady of considerable depth, and beyond it rises up a graceful wooded hill. The ancient walls run along the brink of the ravine, being in some places founded on the very edge of the scarped rock. After reaching the top they are carried over the rocky ridge and then westward for nearly half a mile along the brow of the second wady, when they turn down the declivity in a zigzag course toward the north-west. The north-western section of the city I did not examine minutely, as it seems to contain only the ruins of private houses. The accompaning plan I drew up from sketches made from several commanding positions, and



PLAN OF KUNAWÀT, THE ANCIENT KENATH.—Drawn by J. L. Porter.

from estimates of the length of the streets by the time it took me to walk along them. It is merely intended to give the reader an idea of the situation of the city and the position of the principal ruins.

After leaving the sheikh's house we walked up a street along the brow of the ravine; the ancient pavement is in excellent preservation. On the right are ruins of large private houses, solidly and elegantly built. The stone doors especially attracted my attention, as most of them are panelled and have ornamental mouldings, while a few are adorned with wreaths and fruit in bas-relief. I observed an ancient aqueduct running parallel to the street. This must have been a favourite quarter with the chief men of the city, for the private mansions appear to have been all spacious and expensively built. The situation, too, is attractive—the wild ravine lying below, with its foaming torrent dashing over a rocky bed, and its theatre and temple; and the castellated heights above, over which rose up the graceful wooded summits of the hills of Bashan. On reaching the top of the hill we turned to the right between fine buildings and entered a spacious area covered with large and closely-jointed flags. On the southern side of this area is a pile of building as striking from its great extent as from the elegance of its architecture. (Marked *f* on the plan.)

The worthy sheikh here took me by the hand, for he had become very familiar, and led me to a broken place in the pavement, and there pointed down to what he considered an object of no small curiosity. This opening showed that the whole space under our feet was one series of vaults supported on pillars and arches. This was evi-

dently a vast reservoir to which water was carried during winter from the wady higher up the mountains, and hence led by ducts and canals to every part of the upper city. The extent of these I could not determine, on account of the ruins and tangled thickets which encumber the surface. I was now conducted past fine porticos, and over ruined walls and crumbling monuments, till we reached an elevated spot, from which the sheikh pointed, with a beaming countenance, to a ruin before us.[1] It is a small temple of fine proportions and admirable workmanship, occupying a site well fitted to exhibit its beauty to the fullest extent. In front of it is a paved area, with ranges of vaults below, apparently connected with the others. A little westward of this we came to an oblong open area like a hippodrome, completely encompassed by a ruinous sloping wall as if there had been at one time several ranges of benches placed along its side. Here we found numbers of statues of men in armour, female figures, and equestrians, the fragments of which are lying about among the ruins. These figures the sheikh pointed out to me, and with much eagerness asked what they were intended for; I answered, For ornament; and, with an intelligence which few of his countrymen possess, he seemed both to comprehend and appreciate my meaning. A fanatical Muslem would have cursed them, and a Christian priest would doubtless have spit upon them, but this shrewd Druze regarded them as remnants of a more polished and prosperous age.

We continued our walk through a maze of half-ruined buildings within the walls on the south-western side of the

[1] A sketch of this temple is given at the head of this chapter.

city; and then, climbing over to the outside, I observed that at this point the wall is in a good state of preservation, with towers at intervals. A few hundred yards distant, amid the thickets of oak, stand a number of tombs, somewhat resembling those at Palmyra. Following the line of the wall, we entered the city again by the gateway marked 2 on the plan, and passed down a well-paved street. On our left we examined a large private house with a handsome court-yard, having galleries supported on columns (*k* on the plan). Below this on the right is a church, with nave and aisles, separated by ranges of short columns. This building is of a comparatively late period, and the architecture shows a depraved taste. The columns in the interior appear to have been taken from more ancient structures. We now returned to the sheikh's house well pleased with our walk.

The evening was spent in lively conversation, in which some of the chief men in the village took part. The sheikh is a man of superior sagacity and intelligence; he asked eagerly about European manners, and appeared delighted with Nikôla's description of railways and electric telegraphs. He was not satisfied with a mere utterance of "Wullah!" or "Mashullah!" in doubting astonishment, but he questioned us until he got a full explanation of the principles of locomotion and electricity. From mechanics the conversation turned to politics, and now the sheikh, who sat beside me, assumed a low and confidential tone, and plied me with questions innumerable as to the intentions of the government about the conscription and the renewing of the war. It was in vain I pleaded my ignorance of politics, and especially of the intrigues and

bribery practised by the local authorities in Damascus; still he pressed me to reveal the secret he was confident I possessed. I told him my private opinion was that the war would not be resumed, and that the conscription, in so far as they were concerned, had been abandoned. By every means in my power I endeavoured to show that I was in no way connected either with the government of Turkey or England, and had no political object in my present tour: still they would not be persuaded; and the fact that I had brought strong letters of recommendation from Mr. Wood, their mediator with the Sultan, to all their principal chiefs, tended much to make them suspect I had other purposes in view besides mere curiosity or antiquarian zeal.

During the evening we were favoured with a visit from the village schoolmaster, the first I had yet heard of in the Haurân—a venerable old man, with sparkling eyes and a flowing beard. He was received with great respect and placed in the "highest seat." His school, he informed us, consisted of some twenty children; and I had seen them bawling over their lessons on a house-top, while examining the ruins in the afternoon. He stated in reply to my questions that the scholars had no books, and he was obliged to teach them by writing letters and words on little boards, which they all carried about and rhymed over till the form and sound were imprinted on the mind. I afterwards saw the little urchins walking through the city proud of exhibiting their boards, which they carried round their necks. Here there was a zeal for instruction altogether remarkable. Under such disadvantages, in such times, and with so few inducements to study, it is truly

wonderful that any attention should be given to the subject of education. We greatly regretted that the books we had with us were such as would not be acceptable to these people. With all the privileges and opportunities possessed by my countrymen fresh in my memory, I could not but sympathise deeply with these poor children, forced to learn the first principles of their language from rude letters scratched upon rough boards; and I could not but look with a feeling of respect and admiration on the man who, without remuneration, gave himself to the self-imposed task of instructing youth. I learned that most of the boys and young men in the village could read, and not a few of them write.

The chief sheikh of the Druze religion in Syria resides in Kunawât. I did not see him, but Mr. —— paid him a visit, and had a long interview with him. I heard from him that there was nothing in the appearance of the chief to distinguish him from others of his race, except superior intelligence. He had a few manuscripts ranged round his room.

During the evening a number of the Arabs who are natives of these mountains visited us. They hold a middle place between the Bedawîn and the *Fellahîn*. They live in tents like the former, but they remain stationary like the latter. In the evening all went away except one, whom I recognised as having been among those who were lurking round us at Deir es-Sumeid. With his peculiar ideas and primitive remarks we were much amused, as they tended to illustrate the character and habits of his race. A part of the conversation that occurred between us during the evening may afford the reader some insight into Arab life in this district.

"What brought you to the *Deir* when you saw us there?" I asked him.

"To strip you," he coolly replied.

"And why did you not do it?"

"Because Mahmûd was with you."

"But why would you plunder us? we are strangers, and not your enemies."

"It is our custom."

"And do you strip all strangers?"

"Yes, all we can get hold of."

"And if they resist, or are too strong for you?"

"In the former case we shoot them from behind trees; and in the latter we run."

"How do the people of your tribe live? Do they sow or feed flocks?"

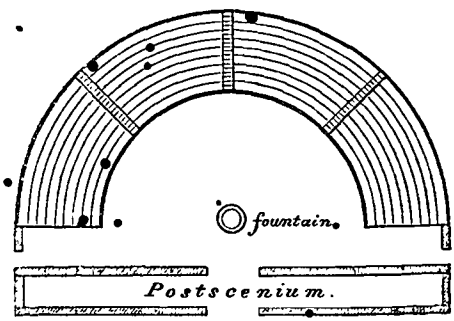
"We are not *fellahîn*. We keep goats and sheep, hunt partridges and gazelles, and steal!"

"Are you all thieves?"

"Yes, all!"

These answers were given with the greatest composure, and quite as a matter of course. As the evening advanced, the Druzes, who wished to show us every respect, requested the Arab to withdraw to some other place, but he stoutly refused, and said he would sleep with the *beggawât*. Our servants also urged him to remove, but he treated them with silent contempt. Some of the principal Druzes now seemed inclined to interfere seriously, but I said the man was quite welcome to sleep where he pleased, so far as we were concerned. The sheikh, hearing this, told the others to let him remain, but on retiring we heard him say with a gentle but emphatic voice, "Take care and do not steal anything from this room."

February 4th.—We set out at an early hour to explore the ruins. We first directed our steps to the ravine, crossed the rocky bed of the stream, and walked up along its right bank to the little theatre I had seen on the pre-



Plan of Theatre at Kunawât.

vious evening. We found it nearly perfect with the exception of the front wall. It is in a great measure hewn out of the solid rock in the side of the cliff, and faces the west. The spectators thus enjoyed a glorious view—immediately in front rose up the rugged side of the ravine, surmounted by the battlemented wall and the stately mansions of the principal citizens; while a little to the right they looked through the vista of the ravine to the broad plain, and the snow-capped Hermon towering up far beyond. The arena is a semicircle 21 yards in diameter, and the benches rise up round this, in regular order, without any intermediate *præcinctio*. Three *cunei* or flights of steps lead to the benches, of which there are nine ranges, the lowest being elevated about 5 feet above the arena. The principal entrances were from the sides, between the back wall of the arena and the ends of

the seats; but there was also a spacious door in the centre of the wall, opening into a long and narrow *postscenium* or portico. In the middle of the stage was a fountain, in which we still found excellent water. On the wall encompassing the stage, below the lower bench, is a Greek inscription in large and well-formed characters,[1] from which we learn that a certain magistrate, called Marcus Oulpius Lusias, erected this building at his own expense as an opera (Ὠδεῖος) for his fellow-citizens.

A short distance above the theatre is a little temple, erected over a fountain, or small reservoir, into which the water flows from two ducts at the sides. In the centre there appears to have been a *jet d'eau*. From this building a series of steps hewn in the rock leads up to the ruins of a massive tower of rustic masonry, but apparently of an earlier age than the Roman rule in Syria. Within it are several stone doors of great beauty, with panels and fretted mouldings, and bas-reliefs of flowers and fruit. In one of them I observed a place for a lock and also a keyhole! A short distance eastward are the lower walls of a circular tower of excellent masonry and high antiquity. It is 84 feet in circumference. In the distance I could see from this spot several other round towers, which I suppose are of a similar kind, but what they were originally intended for I could not tell.

These ancient towers occupy a commanding position on the summit of the rocky cliff overhanging the ravine; and from beside them my eye wandered over one of the most beautiful and interesting panoramas I ever beheld in Syria. From many spots amid the mountain-peaks of Libanus and

[1] This inscription is given in Corpus Inscr. Græc. fol. 264, No. 4614.

Antilibanus I have looked upon wilder and grander scenes than that now before me. Standing on the summit of the old castle above Palmyra, ruins more extensive, and buildings far more magnificent in their proportions, and for more gorgeous in their details, lay at my feet; from the crumbling walls of the Temple of the Sun at Bâalbek I saw prouder monuments of man's power, and more exquisite memorials of his genius; but never before in Syria had I gazed upon a scene which nature and art had so combined to beautify. It is not the savage grandeur of Libanus, with frowning cliffs and snow-capped summits; nor is it the flat and featureless Bâalbek, with its Cyclopean walls and aërial columns, so seemingly out of place, that one is almost inclined to ask what brought them there; nor is it the blasted desolation of Palmyra, whose white ruins are strewn over a barren plain, without a lichen or a bramble to relieve the intense whiteness. Here there are hill and vale, graceful wooded slopes and wild secluded glens, frowning cliffs with battlemented summits, moss-grown ruins, and groups of tapering columns, springing up from the dense foliage of the evergreen oaks of Bashan. Hitherto I had been struck with the nakedness of Syrian ruins. Fallen columns are half buried in dust, sculptured pediments lie on the gravelly soil; and, graceful though the columns are, and rich the fretwork that adorns frieze and cornice, yet, as pictures, they contrast poorly with the ivy-mantled abbeys of England, or the moss-grown castles of the Rhine. Here, however, the scene is changed. The fresh foliage hides all defects, and enhances the beauty of the noble portico and massive wall, while the luxuriant creepers twine

round the pillars, and wreathe themselves as garlands among the volutes of the capitals.

As we stood and gazed, almost spell-bound, the whole hill-sides around seemed suddenly filled with life, and the glens and vales resounded with the cry of the shepherds and the bleatings of their vast flocks as they led them off to pasture. Each shepherd carried his little skin of provisions (doubtless an exact counterpart of the ancient *scrip*[2]) and his pitcher of water, while across his shoulders was slung his firelock—that indispensable companion in this land of strife. The shepherds had none of that peaceful and placid aspect which is generally connected in the mind with pastoral life and habits; they were all wild and savage-looking, especially the Arabs. The countenance of the Druzes, however fierce and stern, always relaxed into a smile as they passed by us; but the Arabs scowled upon us, and every glance seemed to say, "If we had you half an hour distant from the Druzes you would feel our power." The equipment of these men was in general very formidable. In addition to the long gun, most of them carried a light ornamented battle-axe, while in the belt were pistols and a dagger.

After breakfast Mr. Barnett and I again resumed our researches. Leaving him to copy some inscriptions, I proceeded alone to the temples on the summit of the ridge, and here, while examining the interesting ruins and endeavouring to obtain a correct plan of the group of buildings, I observed four Arabs creeping stealthily toward me from behind a grove of oak-trees. I was now alone, unarmed, and at least a quarter of a mile from any in-

[2] 1 Sam. xvii. 40; Matt. x. 10; Luke xxii. 35.

habited dwellings; and I had little doubt that these men intended to try to rob me and then effect their escape. I well knew they dare not fire upon me; so, taking a hasty glance at the nature of the ground, and not appearing to have noticed them, I ascended to the top of the wall, and walked along it for a short distance full in their view, as if intending to retrace my steps to the small temple. I soon reached a broken part not easily passable, and descended to the inside, observing as I went down that the Arabs had changed their course, and were now fast moving toward the breach in the wall at the little temple. As soon as I was out of sight a few seconds led me across the hippodrome and over the broad ridge of stones at the end of it, and then, winding among the dense underwood and scaling some walls, I was soon sitting quietly on the top of a house in full view of half a dozen Druzes in a neighbouring court. Taking out my sketch-book, I sat down to take a view of the little temple which stood out in bold relief from the background of a fine wooded hill.[3] While thus engaged I was a good deal amused by my friends the Arabs, gliding like cats from bush to bush, and at last, when sufficiently near, making a simultaneous dash at the temple door. Great was their surprise when they found I was not there, and it was greater still when they saw me quietly looking at them from the distance.

Mr. Barnett having come up with several Druzes, we proceeded together to the group of buildings, marked *f* on the plan. This structure appeared so singular in design that we took measurements and sketches on the spot, and

[3] See sketch of this temple at the head of the chapter.

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from these I constructed a plan. There were, however, originally other apartments and halls attached to the sides besides those described below, which are now so completely ruinous that it is in vain to attempt to trace their foundations.

The only apartments now distinguishable are three. The first is not in its original state, the western door being of a later date than the building itself. The front door has been walled up, and the whole interior refitted for a church. On the western door is a profusion of sculpture, consisting of wreaths and fruit, but it is in bad taste. Several crosses appear in various places. On the north side is a fine portico of eight columns, about 30 feet high, of the Corinthian order. They have brackets for statues like those at Palmyra. The extreme length of this building is 98 feet, and its breadth 69 feet. Adjoining it, on the east, is another hall of great beauty, with a Corinthian portico of six columns of equal dimensions with the preceding. The arrangement of these two buildings is singular, the portico of the second receding a few feet from the line of the former. The pediment, which the six columns once supported, lies in confused heaps around their bases, and I was thus able to examine closely the sculpture of the frieze and cornice. It is all boldly executed in high relief, exhibiting figures of satyrs with grotesque features, encompassed by wreaths of flowers and bunches of grapes. The front wall is wholly prostrate. The interior is 81 feet long by 69 feet wide, and a colonnade encircles it at the distance of 11 feet from the wall. All the columns have square plain capitals, with the exception of two at each end before the doors, which have

Corinthian capitals. The height of the order I estimated at about 24 feet. On each side of this hall is a small gallery, apparently in the thickness of the wall, supported overhead by triple arches resting on two short pillars.

Another large hall is joined to this by a door on the south side. This door is one of the richest and most beautiful I have anywhere seen. The architrave and sides are elaborately ornamented with figures of the cornucopia, surrounded by wreaths of leaves and flowers and bunches of grapes, in high relief, projecting in some places nearly a foot from the surface. On the soffit is a Greek cross, but apparently inserted at a later period. The hall is 84 feet in length, with a semicircular apse 15 feet deep at the southern end. The breadth I could not determine on account of the vast heaps of rubbish piled up around the places where the walls once stood. Two ranges of columns, seven in each range, ran down each side of the building; they have plain square capitals, but the cornice was richly ornamented with fruits and flowers. On each side of this chamber are massive foundations of other apartments; but the whole ground is now so encumbered with huge blocks of stone and thickets of underwood that I was not able to form a plan of them.

We could discover no inscription or other memorial that would tend to throw light on the history of this noble pile, or on the object for which it was first intended. It struck me forcibly at the time that the whole of the buildings which crown this ridge may be attributed to the genius and taste of one individual. The palace, with its spacious paved esplanade, inexhaustible reservoirs of water, and splendid halls, the temple near it, and the hippodrome,

with its numerous statues,—these and the other smaller buildings grouped together in and around the area appear to have constituted parts of one magnificent establishment. The site was admirably selected, as beautiful prospects meet the eye on every side: on the south and east the glens and valleys and graceful mountain-peaks covered with eternal verdure; and toward the west and north the wide expanse of the plain, shut in, in the far distance, by the towering summits of Antilibanus and Hermon. What a testimony have we here to the vanity of earthly greatness! The most refined taste, and the most abundant wealth, and the most profuse expenditure, were not sufficient to lengthen a life or even to immortalize a name. The founder of these noble structures, where is he now? His dust, it may be, mingles with the crumbling ruins, or is blown about by the winds of heaven in some distant clime. The monuments that he erected have for ages outlived him; and even these, so skilfully reared up and so beautifully ornamented, how faded their splendour! But the revelation of God tells us that this land is desolate because it was cursed; and it was cursed because of the sins of its inhabitants. "The earth mourneth and languisheth; Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down; Sharon is like a wilderness: and *Bashan* and Carmel shake off their fruits. Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might."[4]

The small temple west of this palace is of beautiful workmanship. There is an oblong cell with *antæ*, having two columns between; and in front of this four beautiful Corinthian columns supported a pediment, now fallen. The

[4] Isaiah xxxiii. 9 and 13.

columns still stand, and are about 34 ft. high, and 3 ft. 6 in. in diameter. The dimensions of the cell I did not take; but the proportions are certainly much more symmetrical than the plan of Burckhardt would lead one to suppose.[5] It is not, as Buckingham states, 70 paces long by 35 wide; it may, probably, be about as many *feet*.[6]

In the open area in front of this temple I observed several fragments of sculptured figures, and among others that of a lioness, well executed. Near this is a colossal head in bold relief; the face is broad, and the cheeks large out of proportion. The eyes are soft and well formed, but the forehead is low, and the brows prominent and contracted. On the forehead is a *crescent*, with rays shooting upwards from it; the whole face is encircled with thick tresses. The mouth and chin are broken away. The appearance of this figure is very striking. The breadth of the face is about 3 feet, and it stands out from the block nearly 2 feet *in rilievo*. It struck me at the time that this was probably intended to represent *Ashtoreth*, or *Astarte*, the celebrated goddess who, according to the testimony of ancient writers, was worshipped universally by the Syrian nations, and by the Arabs before the time of Mohammed.[7] It is now admitted that Ashtoreth was originally a name for the *moon*, or at least a representation of that luminary; and hence the crescent found upon most of the figures of the goddess. On some of the coins of the Emperor Severus she is figured with her head surrounded by *rays*. Both the rays and the crescent are seen on this

[5] Travels in Syria, p. 86. The sketch of this temple is given above.

[6] Travels among Arab Tribes, p. 243.

[7] Compare 1 Kings xi. 5, 33; 1 Sam. xxxi. 10; Jud. ii. 13; Herodotus, *Clio*, 131; and Thalia, 8.

figure. We learn from the Scriptures that the country beyond the Jordan, and especially Bashan, was famed for the worship of Ashtoreth from the very earliest ages. One of its principal cities was called *Ashteroth-Karnaim* —that is, "Ashteroth of the *two horns*, or *crescent*"—in the days of Abraham;[8] and this city was one of the capitals of the kingdom of Bashan when the Israelites conquered the land.[9] It is, consequently, highly interesting to find in one of the most ancient cities of Bashan monumental evidence of the worship of Ashtoreth.

Head of Ashtoreth.

I now examined more particularly the fragments of statues that are scattered around the ancient hippodrome, and observed among them some singular in form and composition. One had the body of a lion, the bust of a woman,

[8] Gen. xiv. 5. [9] Deut. i. 4; Josh. xii. 4.

and the head and wings of a bird; near it was a part of an equestrian statue, well executed, and beside this the trunk and thighs of a figure clothed in scale armour.

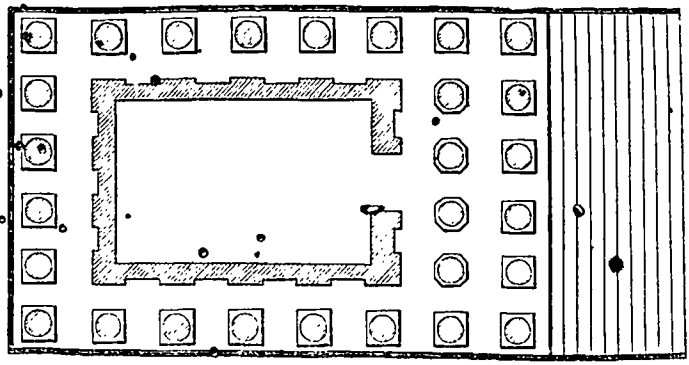
Having completed our hasty survey of this interesting group of buildings, we walked down through immense piles of rubbish, intermixed with broken columns, on the inside of the western wall. The path led us through a court in which several Druze women were sitting at work. They covered the lower part of their faces as we approached. While I was drinking a bowl of water, which one of them had handed me, I observed them all rising and embracing a little boy who followed in our train; and each woman, as she kissed him, burst into tears, and uttered the words, "May God preserve you, O my son!" Astonished at this strange procedure, I inquired the cause, and was informed that his father had recently fallen in battle, and that his mother had been shot by the Turkish soldiers while attempting to carry away the body of her husband! Poor boy! he had early felt the sorrows of his wretched country, and the mad brutality of its rulers. When we had gone away some distance, I put a piece of money in his hand; he looked at me for a moment in astonishment, and at the shining coin, and then shut his hand firmly and ran back to the women. As I scaled the crumbling walls I could hear their voices imploring blessings on the head of the *beg* who pitied the poor orphan.

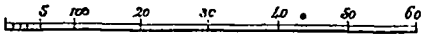
A walk of ten minutes down terraced slopes brought us to a rich wooded vale, in which stands one of the most beautiful buildings in this city—a peripteral temple erected on an artificial platform about 12 ft. high. The interior of the platform has crypt-like chambers, with massive piers

supporting the vaulted roof. The temple consisted of a cell 45 ft. long by 30 ft. wide, with pilasters along the walls. In front, towards the east, was the portico, consisting of two rows of columns, six in each row; and round the other sides ran a range of columns corresponding to those in the outer line of the portico. All these pillars stand upon square pedestals 6 ft. high, and the height of the order I estimated at 36 ft. The capitals are Corinthian, and finely executed. The extreme length of the building is 78 ft., and the breadth 48 ft. Each column seems to have had a short inscription on its base; but these are now so much broken and mutilated, that, though I copied them all, I have not been able to gain any information from them as to the age or design of the building. On the top of one of the pedestals, beneath where the shaft once stood, are the following letters—ΡΟΥΦΕΙΝΟΥΚΑC. Ritter observes that, from a fragment of an inscription copied by Buckingham, it has been ascertained that this was a temple of the sun;[1] but I have carefully observed all the letters copied by Buckingham, and my own copies also, but I have not been able to detect the slightest allusion in them as to the nature of the edifice.

The situation of this temple is very beautiful. The sides of the vale slope gently up, and are thickly wooded. On the east are the walls of the city; and over them rise wooded heights, crowned with ruins and round towers. Westward there is an easy declivity to the plain; and here

[1] Palästina und Syrien, ii. 932. Descriptions of this ruin may be found in Burckhardt's Trav. in Syr. pp. 83, 84; and Buckingham's Trav. among Arab Tribes, pp. 240, 241.





Scale of Feet.

Plan of Peripteral Temple at Kunawât.

the grey ruins of 'Atîl may be seen rising up amid the dense foliage.

Burckhardt's statement about the statues led me to make inquiries everywhere regarding them. We were, consequently, first shown those scattered among the ruins on the summit of the ridge; and we were now informed that two statues of *slaves* were in a house between this temple and the city. On reaching the place we were ushered down into a dark cellar, and, when a light was procured, were led about through extensive subterranean apartments in search of the figures. Our search was in vain, until the mistress of the mansion came and led us to the spot; and there, on stones in the vaulted roof, pointed out two faces in *alto-rilievo*, beautifully executed, but now black with dust and the smoke of torches. Though we were disappointed in the statues, we were interested in these

vast subterranean chambers that exist in such numbers in this land.

On emerging we were surrounded by a crowd of Bedawy women, who earnestly besought us to cure a sick child, or write a charm for its afflicted mother—a young and beautiful woman who stood weeping beside us. The poor child was suffering from some fearful disease of the head, that appeared to have eaten away nearly the whole flesh from one side of it.

Mr. Barnett diligently collected all the inscriptions he could find; but antiquarians no less zealous had been there before him, and had left few discoveries to be made in this department. From a large building standing on the brow of the wady, in the south-east corner of the city, he copied the following, which is inscribed over a niche—AYẐONIMAKAPI. This *Auxo* was one of the *Horæ*—goddesses who were supposed to preside over the seasons, and to regulate all matters relating to the fertility of the soil. It was natural that such a deity should find a shrine in this land, where the existence of the people wholly depends on the cultivation of the soil.

Such are the ruins of Kunawât as they now exist; and my reader will agree with me in stating that there are but few ancient sites in Syria that surpass it in the extent and importance of its monuments. It is not, like some of the other cities we have visited, without a name or a history; its annals, though few and very general, date back more than *three thousand* years, and for nearly two thousand it ranked among the principal cities of the province.

The identity of *Kunawât* with the ancient KENATH and the more modern *Canatha*, Κανάθα, is established be-

yond the possibility of doubt by a variety of concurring testimonies. The analogy of the names is sufficient of itself at least to suggest the strong probability of the places being the same when there is no direct evidence to the contrary. But Seetzen discovered here the fragment of an inscription, on which was the word Καναθηνῶν, given as the name of the people resident in this city;[2] and this is direct evidence of the identity of this site with the ecclesiastical city *Canatha*. The situation too has been described with sufficient accuracy by several writers to enable us to determine its position. Stephen of Byzantium says, "Kanatha is a city of Arabia, near to Bostra;"[3] and the testimony of Eusebius is still more important. He thus writes: "CANATH, a town of Arabia, now called *Canatha*, which when Naboth captured he called it by his own name, and it belonged to the tribe of Manasseh. *It is now situated in the province of Trachonitis*, near to Bostra."[4] This statement is very important, first, as fixing very definitely the position of Kanatha; and second, as proving the identity of Canatha and the Kenath of the Bible. We may add to this that the Kenath mentioned in the Bible was a city of Argob,[5] and in the sequel it will be shown that Argob and Trachonitis are identical. This affords additional evidence that Kenath and Canatha are also identical. But there is still another argument in favour of Kunawât being the site of Canatha equally strong with any of those above alluded to, but which has hitherto

[2] Ritter, Palästina und Syrien, ii. 936.
[3] Reland. Palest. p. 682.
[4] Onomasticon, p. 48.
[5] Compare Deut. iii. 13, 14, with 1 Chron. ii. 21-23.

escaped the notice of geographers. In the Pentinger Tables we have the following names and distances:—

Damaspo.
Aenos . . xxvii.
Chanata. . xxxvii.

The *Damaspo* is either a mistake for Damasco, or an abridgment of *Damas polis;* but no one has yet succeeded, so far as I know, in identifying *Aenos.* When constructing the map attached to this work, the identification of this Roman route was placed in my mind beyond a doubt. On the northern border of the Lejah are the ruins of a large town, now called Musmeih; but from inscriptions on some of its monuments it appears that its ancient name was *Phaenos*, Φαινος, and that it was the *capital* of *Trachonitis.*[6] It is identical, as will hereafter be shown, with the ecclesiastical city Phenutus. It will be seen at a glance that *Phaenos* may have been carelessly transcribed *Aenos*, or that the first letter in the Greek may have been obliterated by accident. From Damascus to Phaenos there *still exist the traces of a Roman road,* and the distance accords precisely with that given on the Pentinger Tables—27 *Roman miles.* Now, from Phaenos to Kunawât there is also a well-defined Roman road, carried through the midst of the Lejah, the ancient Trachonitis; and the distance between these places, as may be seen on the map, is exactly 37 *Roman miles.* Stronger proofs than these could scarcely be adduced for the identity of almost any site in this country.

The city of Kenath is no less celebrated for its remote

[6] Burckhardt's Travels in Syria, pp. 117, 118. Ritter, Palästina und Syrien, ii. 897-899.

antiquity than for its importance. It was chief among the walled towns which Jair conquered in the land of Argob, and added to the territories of the half-tribe of Manasseh; and more than two thousand years after that period it was still flourishing, and ranked by Hierocles among the episcopal cities of Arabia.[7]

The first mention we have of Kenath in the Bible is when the Israelites subdued Og King of Bashan, and took possession of his kingdom; it is then said that "Nobah went and took *Kenath*, with the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name."[8] It is probable that this Nobah was a son of Jair, who took Kenath and all the region of Argob. The latter gave his name to the whole conquered province, while the former only gave his name to the one city.[9] It retained this name for a considerable period, as two hundred years after its conquest, when Gideon passed "by the way of them that dwelt in tents," in pursuit of the kings of Midian, he went east of Nobah.[1] Soon after that period, however, the new name was forgotten and the old one resumed. Josephus refers to it under two forms, *Kana Kome*, Κανα Κωμη, and *Kanatha*, Κανάθα.[2] Near this place Herod the Great fought a pitched battle with the Arabians, who had been excited against him by the intrigues of Cleopatra. Though at first victorious, yet, on being attacked by fresh troops, led out of Kenath under the command of Athenio, Cleopatra's general, he was defeated, and his soldiers, getting entangled among the rocks, suffered severely. Pliny mentions

[7] S. Paulo Geog. Sac. p. 297. Ritter, Paläst. und Syrien, ii. 937.
[8] Numbers xxxii. 42. [9] 1 Chron. ii. 22, 23; Josh. xiii. 20.
[1] Judges viii. 11. [2] Ant. Jud. xv. 5, 1; and Bel. Jud. i. 19, 2.

Canatha among the cities of Cœlesyria.[3] There are some coins of the emperors Claudius and Domitian (A.D. 41-96), with the name Kanathon upon them; and one, of the period of Maximianus, has been found, which tends in some degree to illustrate the peculiar worship practised by the inhabitants, and also to throw light on the singular piece of sculpture above referred to. It has the name KANATA, and on the reverse a figure of *Isis*, with some of the ornaments peculiar to that goddess.[4] It is well known that Isis by the Egyptians was generally regarded as the representative of the *moon*, as Osiris was of the *sun*, and therefore she may have been considered in Kenath as identical with the Syrian goddess Astarte. From the inscriptions at present found in this place we learn that the principal buildings were erected during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian. One of these inscriptions is so important that I here insert it. It was seen by Buckingham, and he attempted to copy it, but with very poor success, as may be seen by a comparison with that here given :—

ΥΠΕΡCΩΤΗΡΙΑCΑΥΤΟΚΡ·ΤΡΑΙΑΝΟΥ
ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟΥ·ΚΑΙC·CΕΒ·ΤΟΥΚΥΡΙΟΥΔΙΑΟ
ΑCΟΥΑΔΑΝΟΥCΑΙЄΛΟΥΦΑΙΜΟΥΒΑΔΑ
ΡΟΥΜΟΓΝΙΟΥΧΑΑΜΜЄΟΥC·CΑΜЄΑΤΟΥΓΑΥΤΟΥ
ΘΑΙΜΟΥΔΟΑΙΟΥ ---------- ЄƮΟΥC'Η≻
ΑΓΟΡΑΝΟΜΟΥΝΙΟC·Μ·ΟΥΛΠΙΟΥΦΙΠΠΙΚΟΥ[5]

[3] Hist. Nat. v. 18. [4] Ritter, Paläst. und Syrien, ii. 938.

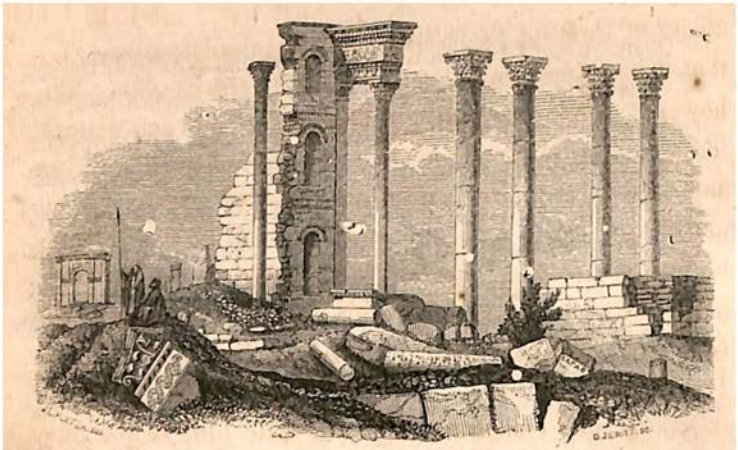
[5] There is considerable difficulty connected with the *name* upon this inscription, when compared with the *date*. The name is *Trajanus Adrianus*, or *Hadrianus*; and from this it would seem that it was placed here under the reign of Hadrian, and not in that of Trajan. But then this does not agree with the date; for Hadrian was not emperor till

The monument to which this inscription belonged, therefore, was erected in the year 8 of the Bostrian era, or A.D. 114, being the 17th year of the reign of the emperor Trâjan; and it is somewhat remarkable that this very year Trajan passed the winter in Syria on his way to Parthia. Another inscription has the name of Antoninus upon it (A.D. 138-60). These are, consequently, among the oldest Roman monuments existing in the Haurân. The name of Canota is found in Ptolemy,[6] and likewise, as has been seen, in Stephen of Byzantium and Eusebius. It attained the rank of an episcopal city at a very early period, as its name occurs in almost all the ancient ecclesiastical lists. One of its bishops was present at the Council of Chalcedon.[7] It appears to have flourished down to the time of the Saracenic conquest of Syria, when it was captured by the fierce Khâled; and since that time, like almost every other city in this unhappy land, it has gradually declined and fallen to ruin under Muslem rule, until the present moment, when it is almost deserted. Its monuments have suffered less than those of many other ancient cities from the destroying and remodelling hands of the followers of the Prophet.

three years after this period, A.D. 117. It is just possible that the date may have been IA instead of H; and this would give exactly the first year of Hadrian, while he was still resident in this country.

[6] Geog. v. 15.

[7] Paulo Geog. Sac. p. 296.



Ruins of Busrah.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM KUNAWAT TO BUSRAH.

Primitive telescope — Tower-tombs — Druze revenge — Ruins of 'Atîl — Singular monument — Description of Suweideh and its extensive ruins — Greek inscriptions and dates — Sheikh Wâked el-Hamdân, the Druze chief — An evening party — History of Suweideh — Plain of *Auranitis* — Tell Kuleib — Visit to 'Ary — Druze hospitality — Errors in Burckhardt's map — The Kings of Ghussân — Approach to BOZRAH — Ancient cities — *Rhose* of the Pentinger Tables identified — Plan and description of the ruins of *Bozrah* — Site of *Beth-gamul* — Beautiful theatre — Boheira the monk, and Mohammed the Prophet.

HISTORY OF BOZRAH.— The Bozrah of Moab distinct from that of Edom — The ancient gigantic inhabitants — The Bostrian era.

WHILE I stood waiting upon horseback till the baggage was all arranged, my friend the sheikh came to me with an old telescope, and asked what such an one would cost when new. On examining the instrument I was no little surprised at the originality of its construction, and inquired how he came by it. He said he had taken it from an

officer of Ibrahîm Pasha's army during the Druze war, but that it had been bruised and broken in the conflict. He, however, having carefully studied its shape and length, took out the glasses and made a new tube of paper. Time and rough usage had now dimmed and scratched the glasses, and he wished to obtain another like it. He said he was short-sighted, and it would be of great service to him if he could see as well as his neighbours. I promised to try and procure one for him if he would come to me at Damascus.

Nikôla now endeavoured to persuade him to accept of some remuneration for the expense he had been put to in feeding ourselves, our servants, and our horses; but he absolutely refused to take a single para! We resolved not to leave without paying for our entertainment in some way, and, when the sheikh refused, Nikôla gave the *bakhshîsh* to the old man who presided at the coffee.

At 1·30 we left Kunawât, and, sending our servants by the direct road, we rode up to the left to revisit the ancient tower-tombs. The buildings are square, and are divided by string-courses into two and three stories. The doors and windows are very small, and within are stone recesses for bodies, similar to those at Palmyra. It is remarkable that Burckhardt found in this city an inscription in the Palmyrene character.[8] Our path was narrow and tortuous, winding among dense thickets of oaks, with ruins here and there shooting up their heads over the foliage. Soon after falling into the regular road we overtook our servants, and here again observed the traces of the ancient Roman highway.

[8] Travels in Syria, p. 84.

As we rode on at a fast walk over the stony path, we overtook a Druze, with his gun upon one shoulder and a little child mounted astride upon the other.[9]. Mahmûd, on coming up, lifted up the child beside him upon his horse. It is one pleasing trait in the character of these people that they are united together, one and all of them, by the closest ties of brotherhood. They have seldom disputes among themselves, and in war they are never divided, but fight as one man. In their dealings with each other they are, so far as I have been able to ascertain, honest and honourable. It may serve to illustrate the strong feelings they entertain on this point, if I here record an anecdote which Mahmûd related to me as I entered Kunawât. When passing over the bridge that spans the torrent, he directed my attention to a flat table-like rock overhanging the valley, on which a conical heap of loose stones was piled up. Two Druzes, he said, some time ago were going to Damascus, one of whom had a large sum of money on his person. His companion, as they went along, forgetting the ties of brotherhood, attempted to rob him; he resisted, but fell pierced to the heart by a dagger. When intelligence of the fearful crime was conveyed to Kunawât, a little band went out in pursuit of the murderer, and after months of careful search they found him lurking amid the wild glens of Libanus. He was conveyed in chains to his native village, and there, upon that rock, was

[9] This is the ordinary mode of carrying children practised universally in Syria and Palestine. As soon as they are able to sit up they are placed upon the shoulder, and there cling with their hands to the veil or turban. This illustrates the words of Isaiah xlix. 22, "They shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters *shall be carried upon their shoulders.*"

bound; a heap of wood and brush was piled round him, a torch applied, and he was burned to ashes in the presence of his people! This is an illustration, not of the way in which Druzes will punish crime, simply as such, but of the signal vengeance they are sure to take on that man who dares to break the holy ties of brotherhood. Another circumstance came under my notice while staying at Kunawât, which shows that the Druzes look lightly on murder when the victim is of another religion. I observed in the sheikh's house a Druze from Shuweifât, in Libanus, whose name Nikôla at once recognised, and it recalled to my mind an event that had occurred more than two years before, while on a visit at Shumlân. An unoffending Christian was murdered near that village, his only offence being that he was a member of a family with whom a sect of the Druzes had a blood feud. The murderers fled, and had little difficulty in evading the law. We now recognised in this respectable-looking man the chief actor in that deed of blood. Those among whom he lives treat him with all respect, though in the eye of Heaven he is no less guilty than he whom they burned on the rock in the valley.

As we rode along, the town of 'Atîl[1] was some distance on our right. This place was visited by both Burckhardt

[1] All that is known of this ancient town may be found in Burckhardt, Travels in Syria, pp. 221-24; Buckingham, Trav. among Arab Tribes, pp. 248-50; and Ritter, Palästina und Syrien, ii. 925-6. The latter has, with his usual industry, collected everything interesting respecting the state, age, and history of the ruins, so far as the researches of travellers have enabled him. It will be observed that the principal buildings were erected shortly after those of Kunawât. The ancient name of the place has not yet been discovered, though it appears in a mutilated form on one of the inscriptions, and is, as Ritter conjectures, something like *Vassatha*.

and Buckingham, and views of some of its ruins are given by Laborde. It is of considerable extent, being larger than Suleim, and it contains the remains of two fine temples. One of these, on the north side of the town, is nearly perfect, the portico alone having fallen. The inscription upon it throws no light on its age or history On the south side of the town is another smaller temple of fine workmanship, erected, according to an inscription copied by Burckhardt, in the *fourteenth* year of the Emperor Antonine, A.D. 151. From another inscription found in this place we learn that a certain tutelary god, called Thyandrites, was worshipped in this place. This inscription is of the time of M. Aurelian, A.D. 161-180, and there is another under the Emperor Caracalla, A.D. 211-217.

After an hour's ride from Kunawât we emerged from the oak forest upon an open and stony slope, and saw the large city of *Suweideh* before us on the summit of a low ridge. A deep ravine separated us from its extensive ruins, on reaching the brow of which I gave our letter of introduction to Mahmûd, to deliver it to the sheikh, and thus inform him of our arrival, while we galloped down to examine an isolated building on the right. In two minutes we were beside one of the most singular monuments I have seen in this country. It is a solid cubical structure of fine masonry, about twelve yards on each side, and nearly thirty feet high. On each side are six Doric semi-columns, supporting a plain frieze and cornice, and between them are coats-of-mail, shields, and helmets sculptured in relief. On the north side, near the eastern angle, about six feet from the ground, is an inscription

in Greek to the following effect: "Odainatus son of Annelos built this monument to *Chamrate* his wife." I did not see any other inscription, nor did Mr. Barnett, though we both examined it with care. I have since observed that Buckingham copied from it an inscription in Palmyrene characters,[2] and it is somewhat remarkable that the name Odainatus is one that occurs frequently on the monuments of Palmyra, and this too was the name of the celebrated husband of the still more celebrated Zenobia. This singular monument is now one of the most conspicuous objects around this ancient city; being situated on a projecting spur of the mountain, it is visible to a great distance over the plain.

The deep ravine called Wady Suweideh runs down between this building and the city. The winter torrent that flows through it is spanned by a fine Roman bridge of a single arch. Crossing this, we rode up the opposite bank, along an ancient road, to a large but shallow reservoir, on the far side of which the ruins commence. We rode at once to the sheikh's house, but found that he was absent. Being ushered into the reception-room, preparations were made for serving coffee. Large logs of green wood were heaped upon the scanty embers, but before it could be *coaxed* into a flame the apartment was completely filled with a dense smoke. Politeness required that we should keep our seats, but smarting eyes *compelled* us to run. We sat down outside the door, but no coffee was brought,—the people were offended. After waiting half an hour we proposed to take a walk among the ruins, and the sheikh's son, a fine boy of some fourteen years, splendidly dressed, with

[2] Travels among Arab Tribes, p. 236.

a silver-mounted dagger in his belt, undertook to be our guide. The first place we examined was a massive peristyle beside the sheikh's house. The columns are clumsy, and the Corinthian capitals in bad taste; the cornice too is poor, and is not uniform all round, and even the columns are of different dimensions and workmanship. The whole edifice was probably constructed out of more ancient materials. On the inside the words Χαιρε Κυριε are on the cornice, but I did not observe any other inscription.

Near this building runs a long straight street, which completely intersects the city. At the upper end are the remains of a Roman gate, and some distance below it is a fine building in the shape of a half-moon, which was probably connected with an aqueduct. On this building is an inscription, with the name of Trajan and the date A.D. 103; it must, consequently, have been erected two years before Cornelius Palma, Trajan's general, subdued this province.[3] This is important, as proving that the cities of this region do not owe their origin to the Romans, but were populous and opulent from a much earlier age: indeed the architecture of the principal dwelling-houses is manifestly not borrowed from either Greeks or Romans, but is peculiar to this district.

We now turned westward down the slope on which the city is built, and, after climbing over vast heaps of rubbish

[3] This date is taken from Ritter, Paläst. und Syrien, ii. 928. In Burckhardt the inscription is not perfect, and there is no date. It is evident, however, from the word ΔΑΚΙΚῶ, as there given, and applied to Trajan, that this inscription could not be of an earlier date than A.D. 103; for it was during that year he triumphed over the Dacians, and, in consequence, assumed the name *Dacicus*. I did not observe the inscription, though the structure itself attracted my attention.

and hewn stones, we descended into the area of a large church, the roof of which has long fallen. It is used as a burying-ground. In the east end is a semicircular apse, and in the walls on each side are ranges of arched windows. Columns, capitals, and fragments of fallen cornices, richly sculptured, encumber the interior, and without are huge heaps of ruins, bearing ample testimony to the wealth and luxury of former days. From the size and decorations of this church we may conclude that it was intended to adorn an episcopal city, but now the sanctuary is waste, and the rank grass grows over the neglected tombs of those that sleep within its mouldering walls: and even the church itself was constructed of more ancient materials. Verily the destroyer has been long at work here! We pursued our course, winding among piled-up ruins;—ruins, nothing but ruins, and desolation, and faded grandeur, and present misery, and filth, met our view. The modern habitations are the lower stories of the ancient houses, and the whole surface has become so deeply covered with the fallen structures, that most of the people seem to be residing in caves.

Some thirty or forty boys, with a fair sprinkling of men, followed us, shouting and dancing in high glee at the strange figures of the Franks, the first probably that many of them had seen. It was only the repeated threats of the sheikh's son, accompanied occasionally by a volley of stones, that kept them from so crowding around us as to stop farther progress. As we passed the houses, too, portly women and coy girls peeped at us with one eye over their long white veils, and laughingly pointed out to each other some wondrous oddity about our dress; our

hats, or *kettles* as they persisted in calling them, attracted most attention; in fact we created as great a sensation as a party of Arabs, with their flowing robes and voluminous turbans, would do in some provincial town in England; and I am not sure but that, had we been transported to a retired English village as we now stood, we would have had a fair share of popularity there also.

On our way through the lower part of the city we saw some Christian Arab women engaged in weaving hair-cloth tents. The webs are made of whatever length may be needed, and then three or four of these are strongly sewed together, and thus the tent is formed. We were told here, as we had also been at Hît and Shŭhba, that all the principal Druze families had these tents of hair now ready in their houses, so that, in case the government should renew the war, and defeat them, they would leave their settled habitations, and adopt a wandering life, rather than submit to the conscription. These females were the handsomest I had yet seen in the Haurân; their features are regular and even beautiful, and the rich brown complexion and lustrous black eyes give an inexpressible charm to their whole appearance. The under lips are stained a deep blue, like those of the Bedawy women; and their hands and arms are also ornamented with a profusion of crosses, saints, and angels.

Near this place we entered a large mosk, the roof of which was once supported upon columns taken from older and more tasteful structures. The whole interior is now encumbered with heaps of ruins. The following inscription was here copied by Mr. Barnett. It is important as containing the name of one of those merchant companies

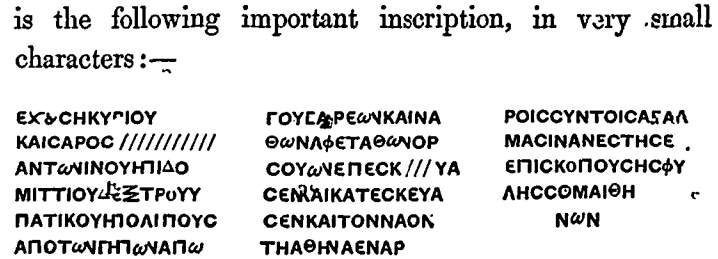
which appear to have existed in this city in early times, and to have been possessed of great wealth, as they erected temples in honour of the gods:—

ΗΠΟΛΙCЄΠΙCΚΟΠΟΥCΗC ΦΥΛΗCΒΙΤΑΙΗΝΩΝ

In this mosk Burckhardt found another inscription on an inverted stone, which we overlooked, to the effect that the monument on which it was inscribed was erected by a company of fishmongers, whose corporation was called Φυλη Αλεξανδριων—"the Alexandrian Firm," as it might be rendered now. The monument is of the age of the Emperor Julian, A.D. 361-3. Buckingham also copied an inscription from a large structure in the middle of the village, which records the erection of the house of "the Company of the Aitaienôn," Φυλη Αιταινων (probably a mistake for Βαταινων), under the proconsulate of Julius Saturninus, in the eleventh year of M. Aur. Antoninus (A.D. 171). Saturninus was appointed by Aurelian, commander of the eastern frontier, being considered one of the most able officers in the empire; but he had express orders never to visit Egypt. After the death of this emperor he went to Alexandria, and there was so unfortunate as to be saluted as Augustus. This proved the cause of his death, for he was soon afterwards murdered by the soldiers of Probus.

A short distance east of this mosk is a small building of good masonry, considerably lower than the surrounding surface of the soil. I thought at first that it was a fountain, but on descending could see nothing that would confirm the supposition. On a large stone over a door

is the following important inscription, in very small characters:—



It appears from this long inscription that certain individuals whose names are given erected a temple and statues to the goddess *Athena* or Minerva. The date seems to be definitely fixed by the statement that it was during the consulate of *Domitius Dexter;* and also by the fact that (M. Aurelius) Antoninus was Cæsar. We know from Roman history that in the fourth year of the emperor Severus he conferred the title of Cæsar on his son Bassianus, whom he called M. Aurel. Antoninus, afterwards better known by the name *Caracalla;* and in that same year Domitius Dexter was consul. The date is therefore A.D. 196.[4]

The ancient city was built on the summit and southern declivity of a long and narrow ridge, and the building above referred to stands immediately at its base. We now ascended a steep bank to the summit, and here found an immense reservoir, not less than one hundred yards in diameter and from thirty to forty feet deep. It is filled

[4] Mr. Hogg gives the following translation of this inscription:—"To the good fortune of the Lord Cæsar (M. Aur.) Antoninus, after Domitius Dexter (was) consul, Hetolipus from the Gepi from Gousarea, and Nathou Aphetathou (from the) Orsovi, prepared and constructed both the temple to Minerva in *Gerrha* (?) with the statues, and instituted overseers of the tribe (of the) Somartheni." I cannot quite agree with this rendering, nor with the date assigned to the building.

by means of a subterranean canal, coming from the wady considerably east of the city. Around this are the principal habitations of the present residents. A little north of this reservoir the ground begins to descend abruptly to the deep ravine of Wady Suweideh, above referred to. In the sides of the ravine are some caves, which, we were informed, are large and difficult of access. From the top of the ridge we got a good view of the extent and character of the whole ruins. They are far inferior in interest to those at Kunawât, but they are much more extensive. I estimated the circumferance at about four miles. A fine Roman road runs past the western end of the city: it is the continuation of that which comes from the ancient *Phæno*. A branch strikes off at Sŭleim to Kunawât; but the main line continues direct from Sŭleim to Suweideh; and runs hence, in nearly a straight course, to Busrah.

On returning to the sheikh's house we found the principal men of the village there assembled. They received us with respect, but not with the same cordiality we had been accustomed to. Mahmûd sat apart apparently dissatisfied; we, however cared little so long as we were permitted to walk about and examine the antiquities without interruption. We were beginning to think seriously of ordering our servants to prepare dinner, when a cry was raised that the sheikh had arrived. Looking up we saw him approach mounted on a splendid white mare, richly dressed in a scarlet robe and white turban; but unattended and unarmed. We rose with the rest, and after the usual salutations I presented our letter of introduction. After glancing over its contents he handed it to

his secretary and ordered him to read it aloud. The whole scene was now changed; every countenance was lighted up with the smile of welcome. Excuses and apologies without number were made; and we could well excuse them entertaining some doubts about strangers visiting their village at such a time, examining every feature of the ruins and of the surrounding country, and asking all kinds of strange questions. It would not have been very wonderful if we had met the same reception we afterwards got from the fanatical Muslems of another place.

Sheikh *Wâked el-Hamdân* is of the noblest family in the Haurân, and is acknowledged as the first in point of rank among the Druze chiefs. The family of Hamdân is originally from the village of Ain 'Anûb in Mount Libanus, but has been settled in Suweideh for more than half a century. The present sheikh, the head of the family, is about forty-five years of age, of small stature and spare form. His face is expressive and his features regular and even noble-looking; he has a prominent Roman nose, small compressed lips, penetrating eyes, and a long black beard. His voice is soft and almost drawling; but his words are uttered with a slowness and precision that show they have been duly weighed. He has the reputation of being sage in council, and brave and skilful, though not of great personal prowess, in the field. He took an active part in the late war.

As the evening wore on the large room where we sat was completely filled by villagers and strangers. A Bedawy presided at the coffee, and entertained us with some stirring tales of desert life and warfare. He was of the tribe Shammâr, and came to Syria with the army of

Ibrahîm Pasha; having been taken prisoner by the Druzes during the Haurân campaign, he never returned to his native country. It is well known that the Shammâr were the flower of Ibrahîm's cavalry; none excelled them in their skill in horsemanship and bravery in the field. I inquired if there were any poets remaining in his tribe; he replied that there were many, and after some little persuasion he repeated a few of their choice stanzas. The Arab poets in general describe the feats of warriors, or favourite mares of their tribe, in short sentences consisting of two or four measures, which are sometimes of great beauty; and, from the boldness of their imagery, cannot fail to excite attention. There is another species of rhyme they often try, and in which some are great adepts. It is somewhat difficult for those who are ignorant of the peculiar structure of the Arabic language to understand its character. They take one word, generally the name of some chief or warrior, and, by changing its form, describe a series of acts or feats in arms that have been performed, each different act being expressed by a different inflexion of the radical word. One word will thus occur six or eight times, with the addition of a prefix, or a suffix, or the insertion of an intermediate letter, or the change of a vowel-point; but each inflexion conveys a new and definite meaning. This, when skilfully constructed, is highly popular with the Arabs; and not unfrequently sentences thus framed are given as puzzles. The warlike achievements of a favourite chief are often described by the inflexion of his own name. The evening passed pleasantly in conversation about poetry and poets, and in reciting choice pieces from the writings and tra-

ditional sayings of some of the greatest among Arab authors.

February 5th. — This morning dawned gloomy and threatening. A heavy thunder-storm, accompanied with rain and vivid lightning, had passed over the place during the night; and now low dark clouds swept over the surface of the ground and enveloped the whole mountains. The air was cold, and occasional smart showers made it feel colder still. We resolved, however, to prosecute our journey. It had been originally our plan to go from this place to Kureiyeh, and there to spend the Sabbath; but we now thought it best to proceed direct to Busrah. The kindness and hospitality of the Druzes were so great that we felt it would be impossible to enjoy the rest and quietness we desired for the coming day while in one of their villages. In Busrah there are no Druzes, and we understood that a few Christian families had taken up their residence there, but in this we were disappointed.

This morning I walked out with Mr. Barnett to see a long inscription on a rock at some distance S.E. of the sheikh's house. On our way we passed several ancient foundations and heaps of hewn stones, and saw a few tower-tombs similar to those at Kunawât. On reaching the rock I observed that one side had been cut away, and upon it a human figure had been sculptured in bold relief, but it is now so much broken that the features are not discernible. Below the figure is the inscription which has already been published in Burckhardt's Travels,[5] and is merely a tablet recording the surpassing virtues of an

[5] Travels in Syria, p. 82.

amiable lady called Phlaovia, the wife of a certain *Aretas*, who died in the year 29, A.D. 135.

There is no city in the Haurân, not even Busrah, that surpasses Suweideh in the extent of its ruins, and yet, strange to say, no clue has yet been found to its ancient name: and there is no mention of it in history previous to the era of the crusades. I have already said that there can be little doubt it was an episcopal city, and it was, therefore, probably one of those to which new names were given by the Romans when they were rebuilt or adorned; but after the decline of the Roman power the old names were again resumed and the new forgotten. There are several of these names among the ecclesiastical cities of Arabia; and two of them, Neapolis and Philippopolis, have been identified by inscriptions—the former by ourselves,[6] and the latter by Burckhardt.[7]

Suweideh has suffered more from time and the accidents of war than almost any other city in this region. It has been ruined and built, and re-ruined and rebuilt; so that it is not possible to form any correct idea of its ancient state. Inscriptions found in it, and already referred to, show that it was a flourishing town previous to the conquest of this province by the Roman general Cornelius Palma in A.D. 105; and likewise that it was celebrated for the extensive trade it carried on with other countries down to the middle of the fourth century. Abulfeda, in his 'Historia Anteislamica,' states that the castle of Suweideh was erected by a certain Arab chief or king, called N'amân, some centuries before the Mohammedan conquest.[8] Gesenius has attempted to show that this city

[6] See above, p. 85. [7] Travels in Syria, p. 98. [8] Ed. Fleischer, p. 128.

is the *Suita* of the crusaders;[9] but the identification is very doubtful. William of Tyre's description of the surrounding country agrees well with this region. He says, "It is rich in the choicest productions of nature—in wine, corn, and oil; and has a salubrious climate and pure air: beside it is a profound valley, in whose sides are spacious caverns."[1] The hill-sides around Suweideh are everywhere terraced, and the whole country bears the marks of former careful cultivation. The declivities of the mountains around are admirably adapted to the growth of the vine and the olive, and the great plain along their base still bears crops of grain, whose luxuriance is proverbial. The people are robust and vigorous, and their appearance indicates a bracing and salubrious climate. But still the description of the historian does not agree in all points with the situation of this city. He says Suita is *sixteen* miles from Tiberias,[2] whereas Suweideh is nearly *forty*. It is true there is a deep ravine beside Suweideh, and some caves in its sides; yet these do not appear to be such as the Archbishop speaks of. "There is," he says, "in the side of a certain mountain a cave, under which was a rugged precipice, and from above there was no possibility of obtaining access; upon one side only was a path so extremely narrow, that a man even unencumbered could scarcely tread it without danger."[3] It is remarkable, however, that the tradition related by William of Tyre

[9] Ritter, Palä. und Syr. ii. 1021-22.

[1] "Est autem regio commoditatibus vini, frumenti et olei, simul et salubritate, commendabilis, et amœnitate præcipua: de qua fuisse traditur *Baldad* ille, Job amicus, qui ab ea cognominatus est *Suites*." Will. Tyr. Hist. lib. xxii.; in Gesta Dei per Francos, p. 1032.

[2] Id. p. 1026. [3] Id.

regarding Bildad, the friend of Job, is still preserved by the people of Suweideh, who add that Job himself was king of the whole province of Bathanyeh.

Suweideh has now been for many years the acknowledged capital of Jebel-ed-Druze, and the residence of their principal sheikh. It is one of the most populous villages in this district. The Druzes and Christians here live on amicable terms, but there are no Muslems.

We left Suweideh at nine o'clock, and rode down the stony slope in a direction S. 20° W. In seven minutes we had on the right a small building called Deir es-Senân, situated on a low mound; and a few minutes afterwards we entered the plain of the Haurân, which stretched away, in an almost unbroken expanse, to the base of Hermon. It has a deep-black loamy soil, in general free from stones and gravel, but round the base of the little basalt tells, which are seen at intervals, are scattered fragments of porous lava, intermixed with rock of a firmer texture. The mountain-range of Bathanyeh, or Jebel Haurân, as it is more generally called by strangers, rises up on its eastern side by easy slopes. Suweideh is situated about the centre of the range on a projecting spur, and at this place the chain is at its greatest breadth. The lofty conical peak called *Kuleib* was now full in view, and presented a beautiful appearance, rising up a graceful cone over all the neighbouring hills; its sides smooth and regular, and densely covered with oak forests. The name of this mountain, as given by Burckhardt and all others, with the single exception of Buckingham, is *Kelb*, كلب, "dog;" (or كليب, *Kuleib*, the diminutive of the same word). It is somewhat singular that Burckhardt should have made

such a mistake, for he was well acquainted with the Arabic language. The real name of the hill is قليب (probably the diminutive of قلب "the heart"), and it is pronounced by the Druzes with great distinctness. My attention was first called to this error when on a visit to the lakes of Damascus, by hearing the name pronounced by our intelligent guide. Afterwards when in the Haurân I heard the name frequently uttered by both Druzes and Muslems; and as the latter adopt the accent of the Bedawîn, there is no possibility of mistaking the initial letter.

At 9·35 we passed the small village of Mujeidel, inhabited by a few families; and here we observed, about twenty minutes on the right, another building, called Deir et-Tureifeh. Continuing in the same course over the rich plain, we soon crossed a shallow wady, with a little stream flowing westward, whose source is in the mountains near the village of Raha. A heavy shower of rain and hail now began to fall, and a strong wind blowing in our faces made us feel its full force. Several times my horse wheeled round and refused to advance against the bitter blast and cold rain. We saw on our right, nearly an hour distant, the village of Kenâkir; and also on the left, some two miles off, Resâs; while on a lofty tell away beyond it stood the fortress-like village of Sehweh. We soon afterwards passed another little stream, coming down from the mountains behind the latter place. Immediately after crossing it we began to ascend an easy slope that leads up to a rocky hill, on the summit and southern declivity of which stands the large village of 'Ary, where we arrived

at 10·40, being thus one hour and forty minutes from Suweideh. We had ridden fast, and our servants were still far behind; we consequently went up to the side of a castle-like building on the summit of the tell to await their arrival, and obtain a good view of the country. The Druze sheikh, however, with half a dozen of his retainers, was soon with us, and carried us off by force to partake of his hospitality. He is brother to Wâked of Suweideh, and a son of the man of whom Burckhardt speaks so highly. As soon as we sat down fresh charcoal was thrown upon the embers and coffee prepared, and, while this indispensable duty was attended to, other preparations less common were being made. The cackling of remonstrant chickens first attracted our notice; then the running to and fro with pans and dishes; and lastly, a woman, entering the apartment, took a large supply of flour from a sack and poured water upon it. We now understood that a feast was in preparation, and we resolved, if possible, to "*'sist procedure.*" We were fully aware of the despatch of Arâb cookery, yet we had no wish to waste time here which might be more profitably spent amid the ruins of Busrah; we, therefore, interposed at once, and, after much talk and sundry protestations from Nikôla concerning the great value of our time, and the pain it gave us to leave them so soon, and our imperishable regard for the whole Druze race, and especially the noble family of Hamdân, we at last succeeded in persuading them that we really meant to go on to Busrah; and thus fortunately saved the poor hens till the arrival of some other guest.

'Ary was once a town of considerable extent, the ruins

being above a mile in circumference; but there are no buildings now remaining of any importance, and there are no traces of wealth or splendour. In a ruinous mosk Burckhardt copied a fragment of a Greek inscription,[4] which is of no historical value, being merely the tablet of some family tomb. The ancient name of the place is unknown, but it may *possibly* be identical with the *Ar'ath*-ו-Κωμη Αριαθας Τραχωνος—of the 'Notitia Ecclesiastica.'[5] The tell, on which it is situated, is in the plain, and nearly an hour from the western base of the mountains, with which however it is almost connected by a low stony ridge. On the south side of this ridge is a broad vale, with a small stream running through it, whose fountain, 'Ain Mûsa, is at the foot of the Kuleib, near the ancient but now ruinous town of Kufr. This stream does not flow, as Burckhardt says, near to the village of Sehweh, but considerably to the southward. It enters the vale of 'Ary, on the southern side of a lofty conical mound called *Tell et-Touwahîn*, and flows westward over the plain till it meets the wady Suweideh and some others. A few mills are driven by it, near the base of the mountains, and hence the name of the wady and adjoining tell—*et-Touwahîn*—"The hill and vale of the Mills."

Burckhardt travelled twice from Suweideh to 'Ary, *but by different routes*, and hence the source of a considerable error in his map, and in all those subsequently constructed of this region. His editor does not seem to have been aware of this fact, and yet a comparison of the two itineraries might have shown him that he could not have

[4] Travels in Syria, p. 225. [5] Reland, Palast. p. 218, 227.

followed the same road both times, since in the second journey he accomplished the distance in about *half* the time he had previously spent between the two places. In his first journey he proceeded from Suweideh S.E. to Rāha, and thence south along the mountain-side to Sehweh, intending to proceed from the latter village eastward, across the mountains, to the great plain. The cold reception, however, he met with from the young Druze sheikh, joined to the fatigue of his clerical guide, appears to have prevented him from carrying out his designs, and he consequently turned *westward* to 'Ary.[6] This détour occupied, in his slow mode of travelling, nearly *five* hours. In his second journey he took the direct road from Suweideh, and reached 'Ary in two and a half hours.[7] In going from 'Ary on his excursion over the mountains he also makes some strange errors in his notes, which are more difficult to account for. He writes thus—"Our road lay over the plain, E.N.E., for three-quarters of an hour; we then began to mount by a slight ascent. In an hour and a quarter we came to two hills, with the ruins of a village called Medjmar (Mujeimir), on the right of the road. At a quarter of an hour from thence is the village Afine ('Afîneh), in which are about twenty-five Druze families; it has a fine spring. Here the ascent becomes more steep. At one hour from Afine, E. by S., upon the summit of the lower mountain, stands Hebran (Hebrân)."[8] Now the village of Mujeimir is about *due south* from 'Ary, and only a little over *a mile and a half* distant; we rode it in twenty

[6] Travels in Syria, pp. 87-8.

[7] Id. p. 224.

[8] Id. p. 89.

minutes. But from Mujeimir to 'Afîneh is four miles, instead of "a quarter of an hour;" and the direction is E. by S. The relative positions of 'Afîneh and Hebrân are also incorrect; from an observation afterwards made at the latter place I ascertained that 'Afîneh lies from it S. 84° W.

These misunderstandings and errors have rendered this section of the map attached to Burckhardt's Travels in Syria, and of all others subsequently constructed from it, very inaccurate. 'Ary has been removed too far southward, and the positions of the several villages around are altogether wrong. The sketches of Burckhardt's map and of Fezy Beg's, which I carried in my pocket, enabled me to note these errors on the spot, and I consequently took such bearings as tended to remedy them. These remarks will sufficiently account for the entirely new features the country exhibits as delineated in my map. Had Burckhardt lived to publish his own notes, most, if not all, of those errors would have been detected and rectified, and the present 'Tour and Researches in the Hauran' would most probably never have been given to the public. None but those who have attempted it can know how difficult it is to maintain perfect accuracy in writing brief notes amid the varied and exciting scenes of travel in this land. Often an important observation has to be recorded on horseback; frequently crowds of men and boys press round one while engaged in writing or taking a bearing; and not seldom the sense of the danger and difficulties that have to be met and overcome press heavily on the mind. In my present journey I had anticipated

these things, and had made such previous preparations as would enable me, in a great measure, to correct any mistakes I might commit in making an entry. I had drawn out, as I have already stated, sketches of the two most important maps of this province, and had marked particularly where they differed from each other, or from any other map I had seen. These I carried constantly with me, and referred to them every few minutes. I could thus see at a glance where they were defective or inaccurate, and on every such occasion I inserted the necessary correction in the sketches themselves as well as in my note-book. That my own map is free from errors I by no means affirm; but such future travellers as may traverse this interesting country will, I am confident, at once admit that it is far more full and accurate than any yet published.

We left 'Ary at 11·30, and, having learned that our servants had gone on in advance, we set out at a rapid pace towards Mujeimir, which now appeared before us on the eastern declivity of a conical tell in the plain. The valley of 'Ary extends up on the left to the base of the mountains, about 3 miles distant, and on its southern side is a low ridge of rocky mounds, a spur from the main chain, extending a considerable distance into the great plain, and shutting in the view in front. We reached Mujeimir in twenty minutes; the houses are all of stone and of considerable antiquity, like all the others in this region. We felt disappointed in not finding our servants here, as we had been told they were awaiting us; but we supposed they had followed the main road to Busrah, which runs on the western side of the tell. We

rode on without dismounting, and, after passing the houses, commenced to ascend the easy slope of the ridge above alluded to. At 12·30 we reached the small village of Wetr, situated on its summit. Some distance to the south-east we observed the much more extensive ruins of Ghussân on a tell. Abulfeda, in his 'Historia Anteislamica,'[9] mentions a tribe or family of Arabs which came from Yeman, in southern Arabia, to this country, several centuries before Mohammed, and whose chiefs were called *Melûk Ghassân*, "Kings of Ghassân." They probably took their name from this place. It was one of these princes who was above referred to as having erected the castle of Suweideh.

The vast plain southward now opened up before us, dotted thickly with deserted cities and villages. That broad black belt in front, with the massive towers and battlements rising up in the midst of it intermixed with tapering column and minaret, is Busrah. Jemurrîn, Kelres, Burd, Ghûsam, and a host of others, are seen on each side; while on the summit of yon graceful hill on the eastern horizon is the ancient castle of Sulkhad, and there, in the intervening valley, are the wide-spread remains of Kureiyeh.

Here we found our servants, and sent them forward along the straight road to Busrah; while we, turning a little to the right, galloped across some rich fields to a large and massive building called Deir Zubeir. We reached it in ten minutes. It is a square structure, with thick stone walls, and has probably been latterly used, as

[9] Ed. Fleischer, p. 128.

its name would seem to imply, as a convent. Around it are clustered a few houses, with stone doors and roofs, but the whole is now deserted. From hence we rode towards Jemurrîn, lying between us and Busrah. Soon after leaving the Deir we struck the Roman road which has already been referred to as running in nearly a straight line from Suweîdah to Busrah. The pavement is in some places quite perfect, and the line of the road, extending across the fine plain as straight as an arrow, is clearly marked. This, I believe, is still the road laid down in the Pentinger Tables. The next station after Chanata is *Rhose*, and the distance between the two places is *twenty miles*;[1] now the distance of Busrah from Kunawât is exactly *twenty Roman miles*. It is easy to understand how the carelessness of a transcriber or the ignorance of a copyist might make *Rhose* out of *Bostra*.

Following the line of the Roman road for about fifteen minutes we reached the brow of the Wady Zêdy, a deep, narrow, and rugged ravine, extending across the plain like a huge fissure. In the bottom is a small stream flowing lazily over its rocky bed. A fine Roman bridge of three arches here spans it, crossing which we rode up to the village. Jemurrîn stands on a gentle eminence on the south bank of the Wady. It is of considerable extent, and contains the ruins of some large and handsome buildings. A lofty square tower beside the bridge was the first that attracted our notice from its resemblance to the tombs we saw in Kunawât. In front is a tablet for an inscription, but we did not stop to examine it. Burck-

[1] Reland, Palæs. p. 421.

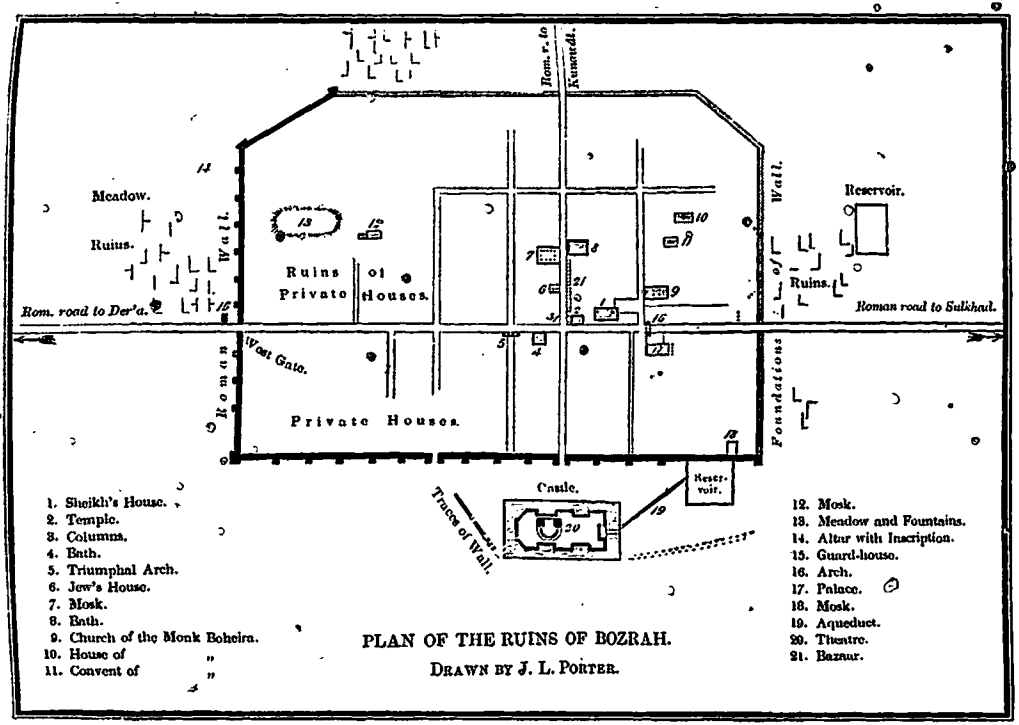
hardt states that it contains a long Arabic inscription, with the Greek name φηλικος over it.[2]

Leaving Jemurrîn we followed the road which leads thence to the eastern extremity of Busrah; and a few minutes' gallop brought us up to our servants. At 1·40 we stood beside the ruins. Our servants, who had proceeded at their usual pace, were thus an hour and a quarter in going from Wetr to the city. The whole distance from 'Ary is a little over six miles. Our first object was to procure a house, or at least some apartment we could call our own, for the approaching Sunday. Mahmûd soon found a small room in the sheikh's house, where our baggage was speedily stowed away and arrangements made for ourselves. The people we had already met with here, though not actually uncivil, showed us no attention or kindness; and some of them even regarded us with scowling looks. We resolved to be on our guard, but to take no notice of incivility; and we at once engaged the brother of the sheikh to guide us over the ruins. This we deemed necessary to save us from insolence and abuse.

That the reader may be able to follow me in my attempts to describe the various ruins of this great city, I have constructed a plan, partly from general measurements, but chiefly from rough sketches made from several positions; it will serve to show the relative positions of the more important ruins and the form of the city.

In form the *walled* city was almost rectangular; as nearly as I could estimate, a mile and a quarter in length,

[2] Trav. in Syr. p. 106.



1. Sheikh's House.
2. Temple.
3. Columns.
4. Bath.
5. Triumphal Arch.
6. Jew's House.
7. Mosk.
8. Bath.
9. Church of the Monk Boheira.
10. House of "
11. Convent of "
12. Mosk.
13. Meadow and Fountains.
14. Altar with Inscription.
15. Guard-house.
16. Arch.
17. Palace.
18. Mosk.
19. Aqueduct.
20. Theatre.
21. Bazaar.

PLAN OF THE RUINS OF BOZRAH.

DRAWN BY J. L. PORTER.

by about, or nearly, a mile in breadth. Without the walls, on the east, north, and especially the west, were large suburbs. Near the north-western angle are the ruins of the mosk called *el-Mabrăk*, from the circumstances under which it was erected. The Khâlif Othman, when marching with his army and approaching Busrab, commanded that a mosk should be erected on the spot on which his camel might first kneel. This was the spot; and here are still the ruins of the mosk.

A straight street intersects the city lengthwise; its direction, by compass, being S. 65° E. to N. 65° W. The north and south walls are nearly parallel to this; and the east and west at right angles to it. Another street crosses it at right angles, at a point east of the centre; and the most important buildings of the city were clustered round the intersection of these two streets; extending also some distance eastward. The lines of many other streets can still be traced; and from these it appears the city was constructed with great regularity. The general plan reminded me of Shŭhba. I shall now describe the several important ruins in the order in which I visited them; and my route can easily be followed upon the plan.

On leaving the sheikh's courtyard by a gateway opening into the straight street, I observed, and copied, a beautiful inscription over the gateway. On stones at the side of the street near this spot I saw two others, but none of them possess any historical interest. Turning westward along the street, here almost covered with the *débris* of fallen houses, we soon reached the ruins of a large and fine temple, only a fragment of which stands: it consisted

of an oblong cell ornamented in front with three ranges of niches. The two exterior columns of the portico still occupy their places: they are only three feet in diameter, though their height cannot be much under fifty feet. They stand on pedestals, and have plinths of white marble. The capitals are Corinthian and profusely decorated, as well as the architrave and cornice that still connect one of them with the wall of the cell. The building and columns are out of all proportion, and display a greatly depraved taste: it is marked 2 on the plan, and occupies, as will be observed, one of the angles formed by the intersection of the main streets. In front of it, on the opposite angle (3 on plan), are four Corinthian columns of great beauty and admirable proportions. The capitals are quite perfect, but there is not now visible a trace of the structure they were connected with. These columns, with the ruins of the temple, I sketched from the roof of a neighbouring house.[3]

As we continued our walk westward along the great street we observed a large building on our left with massive walls and vaulted chambers; it was probably a bath (4 on the plan). A short distance beyond it is a noble triumphal arch, still in good preservation. It has three arches, a large central and two side ones; it is also intersected longitudinally by a series of arches, so that it appears to be resting on square piers. The dimensions of the whole structure are, forty feet in length by twenty in breadth, and about forty in height. It is ornamented with pilasters at the angles and niches between the arches.

[3] See a sketch of these ruins at the head of this chapter.

On one of the pilasters beside a niche, is a Latin inscription, from which we learn that the monument was erected to a certain Julius Julianus, præfect of the First Parthian Philippine Legion. It was probably built during the reign of the emperor Philip.[4]

From this place we turned southward, and, passing over vast heaps of ruins, we crossed the prostrate city walls and walked on to the castle. This building is of great extent and strength, and the outer walls are still almost perfect. The masonry and plan somewhat resemble the Castle of Damascus, and like it, it is encompassed by deep moats, the water for which can be drawn, by means of an aqueduct, from a large tank a little to the eastward. In form it is an irregular parallelogram, with massive flanking towers at the angles and along the sides. The only entrance is by a door on the east side, in the angle of a deep recess; and the approach to it is by a paved road over the fosse; but in ancient times there was doubtless a drawbridge. To describe minutely the several courts, halls, staircases, and vaults, would neither be interesting nor instructive. Underneath are immense reservoirs for water, and vaulted magazines. After passing through a long courtyard we ascended to the summit of the great tower at the north-west angle, from which we obtained a commanding view over the wide-spread ruins and the vast plain around. From hence our guide conducted us through suites of lofty vaulted chambers and long corridors to the south-western tower, which is the loftiest in the whole castle. High up upon it I saw a Greek inscription

[4] Burckhardt's Travels in Syria, p. 227; Ritter, Pal. und Syr., ii. 982.

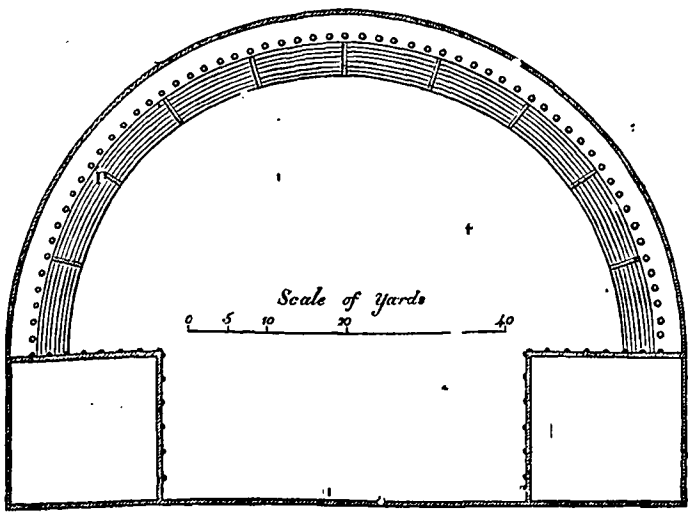
on a tablet, but could not copy it. The country on the south and south-east now opened up before me, dotted with ruined cities and villages. Among others I saw Um el-Jemâl, the identity of which with the ancient BETH-GAMUL, has been suggested by Dr. Smith;[5] and there cannot be much doubt of the correctness of his supposition. The plain here extends to the horizon, unbroken by hill or mountain; and the soil, so far as one can judge from the distance, is similar to that farther north, rich and fertile; while the frequent ruins prove that it was at one time no less densely populated.

Descending from the upper story of this tower, and crossing a crumbling wall, we came suddenly and unexpectedly on one of the most interesting ruins of Busrah—a theatre of great extent and exquisite workmanship. It is raised to the height of some 20 feet upon massive piers and groined arches, like the crypt of a cathedral. This splendid monument of the luxury and magnificence of former days was so constructed that the spectators had, as a background to the scenic representations of the stage, the buildings of the great city, and the plain beyond, terminating at the base of the snow-capped Hermon—I suppose, of course, that the back wall of the stage was low; there could have been no other apparent object in view in elevating the theatre to such a height, save that of gaining a more extensive and beautiful prospect. A question naturally suggests itself to the mind—Was the theatre built within the castle, or was the castle erected around the theatre? I am inclined to think the castle existed previous to the erection of the theatre, though the

[5] Robinson's 'Bib. Res.,' vol. iii. App. p. 153, note; Jer. xlviii. 23.

external walls are now generally of a date subsequent to the Roman age. In some places there are traces of very ancient work in the foundations of the ramparts, both externally and internally; and, besides, had the castle been wholly the work of a later age, the theatre would never have been left in its present state; the benches would all have been torn up for building-stones, and the massive curved wall would doubtless have been removed to make way for structures more important in the interior of a great fortress. It must, I think, be apparent to every one who will take the trouble carefully to examine the place, that the theatre was used since the castle assumed its present form. The exterior walls of the castle have been in part destroyed since the period when theatres were frequented in this land; but they have been built up again on their old foundations, and with their old materials. When the Arabs first seized the city this whole structure must have been pretty nearly in its present form. Another circumstance makes it highly probable that the theatre was constructed within a more ancient fortress. A city in the plain, like Busrah, and bordering on the desert, must have been in all ages exposed to sudden attacks of Arab tribes. A large garrison would thus be constantly required in it. It was besides the metropolis of the province; and to afford appropriate amusement to the numerous soldiers within the walls of the fortress would naturally suggest itself to the play-loving and luxurious Romans.

This theatre is more ornate and chaste in its arrangements and embellishments than those at Kunawât or Shŭhba, and it is also far more spacious. In form it is



Plan of Theatre in the Castle of Busrah.

semicircular, the diameter being ninety-one yards; and six ranges of benches extend around it. Above the upper bench is a Doric colonnade, which once supported an ornamented roof, covering a spacious passage or *præcincto*. The pillars are each thirteen inches in diameter, and ten feet high, and stand at intervals of five feet: about twenty of them still occupy their places. At the ends of the benches are two large chambers, with doors opening upon the stage, which extends backwards between them about forty feet, as seen on the plan. But the most remarkable feature of this theatre is the great extent of the arena when compared with the smallness of the number of spectators it could accommodate—probably not over three thousand. Had it been intended for theatrical exhibitions merely, it would not, I think, have been constructed on such a plan. Being within a fortress, and thus designed

chiefly for the use of the garrison, the extent of the arena would serve for a circus for the exhibition of *athletæ*, gladiators, and the various other kinds of Roman games.

Within the walls of the castle Mr. Barnett copied several inscriptions, and I noticed others, which want of time prevented me from transcribing. On one of these, found in Burckhardt's 'Travels,' is the name of a soldier of the third Cyrenian Legion,[6] and on another is, apparently, the name of an archbishop.

A few families now reside within the walls of the castle; and we were informed that during the spring season all the inhabitants of the place gather in here, that they may protect their flocks and their property from the nightly depredations of the Bedawîn. A massive gate, covered with heavy plates of iron, serves to secure them against all plunderers. Burckhardt states that this castle was at one time maintained by a garrison of seven Muggrebins against the whole forces of the Wahabees; and this I can easily believe, for, to assailants armed with spears and a few wretched muskets, when the gate is shut the place is impregnable. Formerly a strong force of irregular cavalry was kept here by the Pasha of Damascus, but now there is no garrison, and the rapacious Bedawîn roam freely over the fields of the poor peasants, who have to pay them *black mail*. Garrisons of a few hundred horse at this place, at Sŭlkhad, and at Mezarîb, would be sufficient to keep the whole Arab tribes of the desert in check, and the fertile plain of the Haurân would then be made to yield one hundred fold its present produce of grain. But here, as elsewhere, the Turks manifest no

[6] P. 233.

regard either for the welfare of the people or the improvement of the soil. If the sordid pasha, who has bought his place, can wring as much from the poor peasant as will amply repay his outlay, he cares not though the soil become a desert, and the towns and villages heaps of ruins.

Returning again to the triumphal arch, we repassed the temple and columns, and followed the line of the straight street northwards. This street resembles those of modern eastern cities, being narrow, with a raised path on each side, and having ranges of open stalls along it. These, however, are of a comparatively modern date, as is evident from the fragments of columns and capitals that are built up in the walls. As we proceeded our guide pointed out on the left an ornamented doorway (6 on the plan) leading into a ruinous house, called *Beit el-Yehûdy*, "the house of the Jew;" the tradition of which is as follows:—The governor of Busrah, in the early days of Islam, wished to found a mosk, and the site selected was occupied by the house of a certain Jew. He was ordered to give up his property, but refused; his house was consequently pulled down, and the mosk built. The Jew however repaired to Medina and requested an audience of the Khâlif. He was directed to the tombs without the walls, and there he found 'Omer clothed in rags, wandering through the cemetery. Upon making his complaint the just Khâlif made no reply, but demanded ink and paper; the Jew had no paper, and 'Omer, taking the jawbone of an ass, wrote upon it these words—"Pull down the mosk, and rebuild the Jew's house:" delivering this to the supplicant, he resumed his walk. The Jew returned,

the Khâlif was obeyed, and the ruins of the house are still pointed out. This anecdote is quite characteristic of 'Omer and of the times he lived in. A similar story may be seen in the 'Bibliothèque Orientale' of D'Herbelot.[7]

Passing this house, we came to a large and fine mosk (7 on plan). Its erection must unquestionably be ascribed to the very earliest ages of Islam; and the tradition is probably correct that it was founded by the Khâlif 'Omer. Its form is nearly square, and the entrance is by a small door, beside a lofty minaret. Along the eastern side are two ranges of columns, and on each of the other sides there is one range. Seventeen of these are monoliths of white marble, beautifully polished, and of fine proportions. The columns stand in pairs—the marble and basalt side by side. This gives to the whole interior a confused and ungainly aspect. It is manifest that the building was constructed out of more ancient materials; and the inscriptions upon two of the columns show that they were once intended to adorn a Christian church. One of them has the date 383, A.D. 489.

Opposite the mosk on the east side of the street is a large bath. The pipes for conveying the water to the several chambers are still seen in the half-ruined walls. They are of pottery united with cement, similar to those at present used in Damascus.

In my next walk through the city I went first to the large church marked 9 on the plan. It had attracted my attention on coming into the city. It is called by the present inhabitants "The Church of the Monk Boheira." The external walls are square, but the interior is in the

[7] s. v. Omer.

form of a Greek cross, with a large dome in the centre. The recess on the eastern side was once covered with rude paintings of saints, the traces of which still remain. Over the entrance door is a Greek inscription, showing that the church was erected by Julianus archbishop of Bostra (Ιουλιανου αρχιεπισκ, $\overline{B}$), in the year 407 (A.D. 512), in honour of the blessed martyrs Sergius, Bacchus, and Leontius.[8]

Beside this church is a mosk, near which lies a slab of basalt containing one of the most beautiful Cufic inscriptions I have ever seen. I was anxious to have it removed to Damascus, but the sum demanded by the sheikh was so large that I would not give it.[9] Near this is another church (11 on the plan), called "The Convent of the Monk Boheira;" and on a stone beside the door is a Latin inscription, recording the erection of a testimonial by the third Cyrenian Legion to their colonel Ælius Aur. Theon. A short distance to the north is another small chapel or oratory, containing an altar, with a cross *in rilievo*. Tradition makes this the private chapel attached to the house of the same monk. Over the door is a Greek inscription with the words XAPABOCTPA.

The monk Boheira, whose name is thus connected with three of the buildings of Busrah, was a Nestorian. It is related by some historians that, when the Prophet was a young man in the service of Khadîjah, he was on one occasion returning from Damascus, and in passing through Busrah this monk saw him, and, recognising the *prophetic*

[8] Buckingham, 'Trav. among Arab Tribes,' p. 196. The copy here given is, like all the others taken by Buckingham, very incorrect.

[9] Burckhardt mentions this inscription, 'Trav. in Syr.,' p. 232.

mark, predicted his future greatness.[1] It is now pretty well established that Boheira accompanied Mohammed to his native city. Christian writers state that the monk was dismissed from his convent for some misdeed, and afterwards attached himself to the Arabian prophet and became his principal assistant in writing the Koran.[2] That Mohammed was accused by the people of Mecca of having assistants is evident from his own words;[3] and it is also evident that a great part of the Koran is made up of stories taken from the Talmud, the Bible, and early Christian traditions and legends;[4] but it is not easy now to prove who were the Prophet's instructors in these things. Christian writers have added, that, when the Prophet had received all he wanted from the monk, he killed him.

[1] See Abulfeda, 'De Vita Mohammedis,' ed. Gagnier, p. 12, note *a*. Abulfeda simply says, in reference to Baheira, that "Abu Tâleb went in company with Mohammed on a mercantile journey to Syria, and proceeded as far as Busrah. And there was in that city a certain monk called Boheira, who said to Abu Tâleb, 'Return with this boy, and guard him from the Jews; for this your nephew shall attain to great eminence.' Abu-Tâleb, his uncle, therefore returned with him when he had completed his business." Nothing more is said here about Boheira himself, though the historian el-Wâkedy states that he returned with the Prophet to Mecca; and we learn from another source that afterwards, when the first fit of inspiration seized Mohammed, *Khadîjah sent for Boheira*, who must consequently have been then in Mecca; and from another source we learn that the children of the monk (!) were also there at a subsequent period. These facts the Muslem historians have carefully attempted both to mystify and conceal, knowing that the enemies of their faith desired to show that Boheira was the instructor of the Prophet in many of the things contained in the Koran. For these remarks I am indebted to the kindness of my friend Dr. Sprenger, who is unquestionably the best living authority on all topics connected with Arabian history.

[2] Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 35.

[3] Corani, 'Textus Arab.,' ed. Flügul, xvii. 105, and vi. 105.

[4] See, for example, id. vii. 112; xi. 35; xii.—in which are stories from the Babylonian Talmud; also xviii. 8.

There is considerable difference of opinion, however, as to the manner in which this was done; some maintaining that he did it designedly, while others say the deed was perpetrated under the following circumstances. "Mohammed, having on one occasion indulged too freely in the use of wine, was enjoying himself with a few of his most devoted followers, and among these was Boheira. His companions had long been jealous of the influence this man possessed over their leader, and had resolved on the first opportunity to put him to death. The Prophet having fallen asleep, they now took his sword and with it beheaded the monk, and then returned it to its sheath. On awaking, and seeing the headless body of his friend, Mohammed demanded in his fury who had been guilty of such a deed. "He only," was the reply, "on whose sword his blood is found." The Prophet, drawing his sword and seeing it covered with gore, cursed the wine, and uttered the celebrated command to his followers to abstain from all use of it—"O ye who believe, surely the wine is the work of the devil, wherefore renounce it that ye may enjoy prosperity." [5]

From this place we turned westward along an ancient street now strewn thickly with stones and rubbish, and, passing a little to the north of the large mosk, we reached another mosk standing alone, called *el-Khudr*, the Arab name for St. George (12 on the plan). Beside it is a tomb of some antiquity. Continuing our course westward over the prostrate ruins of private dwellings, we came to a green meadow considerably depressed below the level of the surrounding buildings, and containing a number of

[5] Koran, chap. v. 92.

small fountains of pure water. We soon afterwards crossed the ancient city wall, which is at this place almost levelled to its foundations; and just beyond it there is a small altar-shaped stone with a Latin inscription. Beyond this is a large meadow called *Merj*, containing, like that within the walls, a number of small springs and excellent pastures. Around this meadow are the ruins of an extensive suburb.

We now turned along the city wall southward, and several Arabs joined our party. We soon afterwards heard them whisper to our guide that they would strip us, and that he had better join them and share the booty. He declared that he would defend us with his life; and we were thus saved from what would have been rather a serious encounter, as Mr. Barnett and I were alone and unarmed. We soon reached the great western gate of the city, called by the present inhabitants "The Gate of the Winds." The accompanying sketch will convey a better idea of this beautiful remnant of the ancient Bostra than any description: I took it from beside a little guardhouse a few yards distant. From this gate an ancient paved road runs across the plain in a straight line to a large deserted village called Ghŭsam, about two hours distant. We were informed that it extends as far as the town of Der'a, which some would identify with the Edrei of the Bible.[6]

Sitting down beside the crumbling walls of the little building, I gazed long, *inward* upon the ruins of this great and ancient city, and *outward* on the rich but deserted plain. My companions had taken shelter from a shower

[6] See sketch of West Gate of Busrah at head of next chapter.

behind the wall, and now there was not a human being—there was not a living thing—there was not a *sign* of life, within the range of vision. *There* was that noble gateway, open and solitary,—*within* it nought but heaps of rubbish and piles of hewn stones: away in the distance rose the deserted-looking columns, without an entablature to support or a building to adorn; *there*, too, was the triumphal arch, as if erected to commemorate the triumph of DESTRUCTION; while *without*, the whole country around was waste, desolate, and forsaken. Never before had I seen such a picture of utter desolation except when looking down upon Palmyra; and even there it was not so astonishing. The city of the desert might rise and flourish for a season while the tide of commerce swept past, and while it stood like an oasis in the desert that divides the eastern and western worlds; but on the discovery of another channel of communication it would naturally decline and fall. But Busrah, situated in a plain of unrivalled fertility, with its springs of water, its strong fortress, and its battlemented walls—why should Busrah lie desolate and forsaken? This surely was no city to grow up in a day, and fade in a night! This surely was not a city that depended on the uncertain channel of commerce to waft towards it prosperity! Are not the abundance of its waters, and the richness of its soil, and the wide extent of its plain, sufficient guarantees against decay and ruin? But a greater than human agency has been here at work. The curse of an angry God for the sin of a rebellious people has fearfully descended upon this land. Thus spake the prophet more than two thousand years ago: "The spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall

escape; the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken. Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away; *for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein* . . . . Moab is confounded, for it is broken down; howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled, *and judgment is come upon the plain country*. . . . . upon Kiriathaim, and upon *Beth-gamul*, and upon Beth-meon, and upon *Kerioth*, and upon BOZRAH, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab far and near." [7] The words of the prophet are now fulfilled to the letter.

Passing through the "Gate of the Winds," we walked along the main street eastward. The whole of the western section of the city is thickly covered with the heaped-up ruins of private residences. The roofs have long since fallen in, the walls have crumbled down, and the whole is now like a plain covered with confused heaps of stones, in which the lines of the old streets are seen like furrows. At the triumphal arch we turned to the right, and walked past the castle to the large reservoir. This is an ancient work of great strength and magnitude. It is about 130 yards long by 100 broad, and the depth is 20 ft. The interior is lined with a massive wall of *rustic* masonry, strengthened by projecting buttresses. The water is conveyed to it by a canal from the Zêdy. On its northern side are some ruins of large houses, and a mosk in tolerable preservation; the other sides are open. Burckhardt states that this is a work of the Saracens, made for watering the great pilgrim caravan, which, until a little over a century ago, journeyed from Damascus to this

[7] Jeremiah xlviii. 8, 9, 20-4.

place, along the ancient road by Musmeih and Suweideh already alluded to.[8] The *rustic masonry*, however, is not generally considered to be characteristic of the Saracenic age; and I am inclined to believe that this fine reservoir is of a much earlier date.

Turning northward from the reservoir, we came in a few minutes to a large house or palace, with several courts strewn with fragments of columns, capitals, and sculptured cornices. In front of it is a fine Roman arch spanning the main street.

Such are the principal ruins of Busrah, so far as I had time to examine them. Days might be spent profitably in wandering over the city and exploring what remains of antiquity are to be seen, and copying the inscriptions which have hitherto escaped the notice of occasional visitors. Here, as elsewhere, I regretted the shortness of the time I had it in my power to spend in the examination of ruins so important in themselves, and so interesting in a historical point of view. I regretted, too, the necessity which compelled me to retrace my steps from this place, from whence I could see on the broad plain so many of the ancient cities of Moab, as yet unexplored. These present a rich and important field for the labours of the antiquary and the geographer; and an interesting study also for the student of the Bible. It is not likely that I will ever again visit this spot; but if it should be so, I shall only come on purpose to penetrate farther into the plains of Moab.

During my stay at Busrah I purchased about fifty coins and medals which had been found by the peasants in dig-

[8] Travels in Syria, pp. 232-3.

ging up the soil; but unfortunately they did not remain long in my possession. A few days afterwards they were snatched from me, at a moment when I was glad to escape with my life. Great numbers of these coins, I was informed, are found round this city; but most of them are thrown away as useless.

Busrah is almost deserted. Only some twenty or thirty families inhabit it, occupying the lower rooms of the ancient houses. As a city it has long ceased to exist; it is now one vast field of confused ruins. The number of its inhabitants is decreasing every year; and ere long the place must be entirely abandoned, for the desert tribes are fast encroaching on the domains of the settled cultivators of the soil.

Sunday, 6th February.—To-day it continued to rain heavily at intervals; but we enjoyed comparative peace and solitude. It was with mingled feelings of awe and thankfulness I read in my Bible the things written in former days of Bozrah, and of Bashan and Moab. The terrible fulfilment of many prophecies was now visible around me, and awe filled my heart as I gazed on the predicted desolations; but it was with deep thankfulness I remembered that the very judgments of God here tend to confirm and strengthen the Christian's faith.

HISTORY OF BUSRAH.

The first mention of the name BOZRAH in the Word of God is in the Book of Genesis, where, in giving a list of the kings of Edom who governed that country before the days of Israel's greatness, it is said that "Jobab the son

of Zerah, of *Bozrah*, reigned." It is not possible now to determine whether that city can be identified with the present Busrah. Dr. Robinson suggests that another Bozrah lay within the proper boundaries of Edom, somewhere near to Petra;[9] and a careful examination of several passages of Scripture appear to confirm this hypothesis. In the two places where the name occurs in Isaiah it is connected with Idumæa in such a way as leaves the impression that it was situated within that kingdom proper;[1] and still more definite are the words of Jeremiah when Bozrah is threatened in connection with Edom and Teman, whose inhabitants are represented as *dwelling in the clefts of the rocks*, and as *holding the heights of the hills*, and as *making their houses like the nests of the eagles*.[2] This cannot in any way be applied to the extensive and fertile plains of the Haurân, which are nowhere richer or more beautiful than around the ruins of Busrah. The prophet Amos also uses the words, "I will send a fire upon *Teman*, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah;"[3] and the name Teman is never applied to the country so far north as the present city. It appears then, from these various statements, that we have every reason to believe with Dr. Robinson that the Bozrah referred to in these several passages was a city of Edom situated among the mountains around Petra. But it also appears to me, from a careful examination of the words of Jeremiah in another place, that a Bozrah is referred to by him distinct from the Bozrah of Edom. While pronouncing the judgment of God upon *Moab* he says, "Judgment is come upon the

[9] Bib. Res. ii. pp. 570-1.
[2] Jer. xlix. 7-22.
[1] Isaiah xxxiv. 6; lxiii. 1.
[3] Chap. i. 12.

plain country;" and he then gives a list of some of the cities situated *in the plain*—among which we find the names of Beth-gamul, Bozrah, and Kerioth.[4] His description in this passage could not apply to the land of Edom, which is an exclusively mountainous country, any more than his description in the passage above quoted could apply to the region around Busrah, which is an unbroken plain. We know that Edom comprehended the mountainous tract on the east side of the great valley of the 'Arabah. It was originally called Mount Seir, and was inhabited by the gigantic race of the Horites.[5] Moab lay north of it, extending eastward from the shores of the Dead Sea and the banks of the Jordan over a portion of the now desert plain. It was originally possessed by the powerful Emims, who were allied to the Anakims that held Bashan.[6] It would appear, from a comparison of Gen. xiv. 5-7 with Deut. ii. 10-12, 20-23, that the whole country east of the Jordan was in primitive times held by a race of giants, comprehending the Rephaims on the north, next the Zuzims, after them the Emims, and then the Horites on the south; and that afterwards the kingdom of Bashan embraced the territories of the first; the country of the children of Lot, Moab and Ammon, the possessions of the second and third; while Idumæa took in the mountainous district of the Horites. The Amorites, a short time before the children of Israel left Egypt, seized the northern part of the kingdom of Moab,[7] and from them it was taken by the tribes of Reuben and Gad; but it is doubtful whether the Moabites were ever completely expelled, and, if they were,

[4] Jer. xlviii. 21-24.
[5] Gen. xiv. 6; Deut. ii. 12.
[6] Gen. id.; Deut. ii. 10, 12-23.
[7] Num. xxi. 26.

there can be no doubt that they returned again and occupied the land during the decline of Israel's power. The predictions of Jeremiah above alluded to were pronounced against cities of Moab that had been at one time in possession of the Israelites.[8] From these several statements and facts I cannot but conclude that the cities here mentioned by Jeremiah in connection with Bozrah are all far north of Edom; and that therefore the Bozrah of Edom is distinct from the Bozrah of Moab. There is another circumstance connected with the prophetic denunciations which is strongly corroborative of this view. After completing the sentence of Moab, the Spirit of God adds. "Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days."[9] Whereas in Edom's doom we have these terrible words: "For I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; *and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.* As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it."[1] These two sentences cannot apply to one country; and I cannot therefore think with Dr. Robinson that the two Bozrahs were the same. I consider, moreover, that there is here sufficient ground for identifying the present Busrah with the Bozrah of the plain of Moab.[2]

Reland, who seems inclined to identify Busrah with Beeshterah, one of the cities of the Levites in the half-tribe of Manasseh, says that it is different from both

[8] Compare Num. xxxii. 34-39 with Jer. xlviii. 19-25.

[9] Jer. xlviii. 47; xlix. 6. [1] Id. xlix. 13, 18.

[2] This appears also to be the opinion of Dr. Smith. See Bib. Res. iii. App. p. 153, note 4.

the Bozrah of Moab and that of Edom.[3] With this view, however, I cannot agree, as I can see no data on which it rests. The situation of Busrah answers in every respect to the description given of the Bozrah of Moab. It is this city also which is mentioned in the Book of the Maccabees as having been taken by Judas, with Carnaim and several others. It is here described as lying in the wilderness;[4] and Josephus, who gives a narrative of the same events, speaks as if it lay about three days' journey in the wilderness east of the Jordan.[5] The Greek and Roman name of this city was *Bostra*, and we find it mentioned by Strabo, but without any description.[6] Ptolemy calls it "Bostra Legio," probably because it constituted the head-quarters of the legion stationed in Arabia.[7]

It has been maintained by Ritter and others that the name of *Busrah* is nowhere mentioned in the Scriptures. The Bozrah of Moab, say they, is quite distinct from Bostra, the Roman colony and metropolitan city.[8] It strikes me, however, as somewhat strange, independent of the arguments brought forward above, that a situation so desirable from the numerous springs around it and the rich soil, should have remained unoccupied during the most prosperous period of this country's history; and it seems stranger still that it should at once spring into existence and become the metropolis of an extensive and populous province *immediately* upon the conquest of that

[3] Palest. p. 621; Josh. xxi. 27.
[4] 1 Mac. v. 26-28.
[5] Ant. Jud. xii. 8, 3.
[6] Geog. xvi. p. 520. There is some doubt about the reading of the original in this name. Some read Βοτρυω, but others Βοστρα. The Latin translation in Casaubon's edition reads Bostra. It is probable that this Bostra is a Phœnician town on the coast.
[7] Geog. v. 17.
[8] Palästina und Syrien, ii. 968-9.

province by the Romans. Where there were so many other large cities, is it probable that the Romans would at once proceed to found and erect a new capital? Nowhere in the Haurân are there ruins of greater extent, and nowhere are there such manifest proofs of wealth and luxury. Nowhere is there a site more inviting, and we know that this region was as densely populated before as after the Roman occupation. But we shall see that Roman writers, few and scanty though their notices of Bostra are, afford us some information on this subject which tends to confirm our previous arguments.

In the year of Rome 858, being the eighth of the reign of Trajan, that emperor marched into the east, and his legions were everywhere victorious. His general Cornelius Palma entered Bashan and Peræa, and subdued the whole country east of the Jordan to the desert on the east, and to the defiles of Edom on the south. Bostra was made the seat of government, and was called on the money of the period "Nova Trajana Bostra." Ritter seems to consider the word *Nova* as favouring his hypothesis that the city had no previous existence. But this appears an extraordinary conclusion. He admits that, since this was called *New Bostra*, there must have been an *old* Bostra; but then he seeks the old one in another country.[9] Is it not far more natural to suppose that the old Bostra stood upon this very spot; for, if not, why call it Bostra at all? What had it to do with Bostra? Why not call it Trajanopolis, instead of Nova Trajana Bostra? I consider this as strong monumental evidence that an ancient city called Bozrah stood upon this site. And we

[9] Palästina und Syr. ii. 970.

have some direct evidence that such was the fact, for Damascius states that there was here, previous to the time of the Roman Conquest, a strong fortress or town, though he does not give the name.[1] The Romans, no doubt, adorned the city with public buildings, and strengthened it with fortifications. The theatre in the castle was probably constructed soon after Bostra became the capital of the province, and the ruined temples and baths in the city must have been founded about the same period. Damascius further states that Bostra is not an ancient city, since it was erected by Alexander Severus, who made it a Roman colony. His meaning evidently is that the emperor enlarged it, or probably erected new buildings in it, and bestowed upon it new privileges. The coins of this period bear the legends, "Severus Alexander Colonia Bostra," and "Nova Trajana Alexandrina Colonia Bostra."[2] Alexander reigned from A.D. 222 till A.D. 235, and thus lived more than a century after the time when Dion Cassius states that Bostra was made the seat of a prefect under Trajan. The city was thus growing in importance, and the tide of commerce now began to flow past it from the east to the west, so that it became for a season what Palmyra had been before the hostile armies of Persia and the rebel Palmyrenes themselves checked the commerce along the northern line. In A.D. 245, Philippus, a native of Bostra, was raised to the throne of the Cæsars, and his own city was then constituted a metropolis, as we learn from its coins, which bear the inscription "Colonia Metropolis Bostra." It is strange

[1] Winer, Bib. Realw. s. v. Bostra.
[2] Ritter, Palästina und Syr. ii. 970-1.

that these changes in the political history of so important a border city should have been almost entirely overlooked by the historians of that age. The leading events that occurred there, and the honours heaped upon it, we can now only learn from the scanty records on coins and monuments. These, however, are unusually abundant and full in their details.

On the coins of Bostra we find legends which illustrate many of the inscriptions found in this and other ruined towns and villages in the Haurân. It appears from them that Αγαθη Τυχη, "Good Fortune," was the tutelary goddess of Bostra, and she is represented as a woman, seated, with a mural crown on her head and the cornucopia in her hand, with the words Τυχη Βοστρων. Very many of the Greek inscriptions in this province begin with the words Αγαθη Τυχη, which must be regarded as an acknowledgment of Bostra's superior privileges as capital. Wherever a date occurs on such inscriptions it must be regarded as of the *Bostrian era*, which commenced at the time this city became the capital of the province (A.D. 106). On other coins are figured the implements of husbandry, as a plough or a yoke of oxen; on others again are the peculiar emblems of rearing cattle and pastoral life; while on a very large number are represented the wine-press, or a bunch of grapes, with the name *Dusaria*, Δουσαρια, a deity who, like Dionysius, patronized the cultivation of the vine.[3]

It appears that Christianity spread widely among the inhabitants of Bostra at a very early period of the Church's history. In the days of Constantine it was acknowledged

[3] Ritter, ii. 972.

to be a Christian city, and was made by him the seat of a consulate, and it was soon after raised to be the capital of an eparchite. Being of such importance in a political point of view, it was acknowledged as the metropolitan city of a very extensive ecclesiastical district. Thirty-three suffragans were at one time subject to its primate.[4] About the middle of the third century Bostra appears to have attained to its greatest pitch of prosperity, for then one of its own sons wielded the sceptre of the Roman empire; and from this period to the time of Constantine and Julian a brief sketch of its history is given in the pages of Ammianus Marcellinus. He represents it as one of the most populous and important cities in the whole province of Peræa. He manifestly takes it for granted that there had been a town on that site before the Roman conquest, for he remarks that Trajan showed favour to it, and gave it Roman laws, which its old inhabitants were compelled to observe. These laws were no doubt the same, as Ritter justly remarks, which were given to the ten cities called by the name *Decapolis*. This sameness in laws and in the form of government gave rise to the name, which they received, according to Pliny, "from the number of the cities in which the inhabitants observed the same laws."[5] In succeeding ages these laws and privileges, which had been originally confined to ten cities, were extended to others, and gradually spread until the whole province was governed by them; and hence arises the confusion as to the names of the ten cities really included in Decapolis.

[4] Rel. Pal. pp. 217, 218.

[5] "A numero oppidorum, in quo omnes eadem observant."—Plin. v. 16. See also Ritter, Palä. und Syr. ii. 974.

Bostra afterwards became the seat of a bishop under the Nestorian patriarch, while at the same time it remained a see of the eastern church.[6] This was one of the first cities attacked by the Muslems when they invaded Syria. The people fought bravely for their liberty and their faith, but were at length betrayed by their cowardly governor Romanus. Knowing his base designs, the garrison deposed him and caused him to be confined to his house: unfortunately the house was upon the city wall, and by the help of his family he contrived to open a passage to the outside, by which he admitted a hundred men of the most courageous of the enemy. The people were surprised, the guards murdered, and the gates thrown open. Many of the inhabitants were spared; but they became the virtual slaves of their fierce conquerors. Most of the churches were converted into mosks, and ornamented and enriched by the spoils of the Christians.[7] The features of the city also soon completely changed their character. The spacious streets of the Roman age were encumbered with wretched stalls, between which a narrow and tortuous path was left, barely sufficient to afford a passage to laden animals. The temples and monumental statues were either overthrown or concealed behind the miserable structures of the Saracens. The fortifications were in part preserved and the old castle kept in repair; but the prosperity and glory of Bostra were gone, and the city gradually and steadily declined under the withering influence of Islam until it has become utterly desolate. Though the crusaders often invaded the Haurân, yet they

[6] Asseman., 'Bibliotheca Orientalis,' iii. part ii. cap. xii.
[7] Ockley, 'Hist. of Saracens,' A.D. 633.

were never able to take Bostra out of the hands of the Saracens. Its governor at one time attempted to betray the city to king Baldwin III., but it was saved by the loyalty of his wife, who in his absence gave over the keys to Nûr ed-Dîn.[8] It remained nominally the seat of a bishop down to the thirteenth century. In the days of the historian and geographer Abulfeda, Bostra, or *Busrah* as it was then called, was still a populous town and the capital of the Haurân, having large markets and rich gardens and fields.[9]

[8] Gul. Tyr. Hist. in Gesta Dei per Francos, p. 893.

[9] Abulfed., Tab. Syr., ed. Reisk, p. 99. This author writes the name بصري and بصرا; but the biographer of Saladin writes it بسري. See Bohadin, 'Vita Salad.,' ed. Schultens, p. 148; and also Index Geog. s. v. Bosra. The present name of the place is بصرة, Busrah. See Bib. Res., Appendix, vol. iii. p. 153.

West Gate, Busrah.

CHAPTER XIII.

BUSRAH TO SULKHAD, KUREIYEH, HEBRAN, AND SUWEIDEH.

Adventure with Bedawîn — Approach to Sŭlkhad by Roman road — Description of Sŭlkhad, the ancient SALCAH — The castle — Probable age of the building — Topography of the "Hills of Bashan" — Great numbers of deserted towns — Ancient vineyards — Identification and history of Salcah — Extensive ruins of Kureiyeh — Identified with the ancient KERIOTH — Remote antiquity of its houses — Literal fulfilment of prophecy — Ruins of Hebrân — Inaccuracy and corrections of Burckhardt's map.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE SOUTHERN SECTION OF THE JEBEL HAURÂN.— The cities of *Argob* and *Bashan* — Ancient sites.

February 7th.—DARK, threatening clouds still shrouded the mountains, and swept over the broad plain, as we went out at an early hour to take a final glance at the

ruins of Busrah. The rain however had ceased, and as the wind had shifted northward we anticipated a change of weather and a bright day. We were not disappointed, for a fresh northern breeze cleared the whole sky ere an hour had passed. I proceeded to an elevated spot near the triumphal arch, from which I took my last view of the ruins of Busrah, fixing in my mind every prominent building, as well as the grouping of the whole. I have often had singular pleasure in after years in calling up to memory some striking scene thus visited and attentively surveyed. I have been delighted by picturing the whole of some city or landscape before my mind's eye, as viewed from a well-remembered spot; and thus looking in succession on each prominent edifice, or each striking feature, to which my attention had been called of yore by historic association or architectural or natural beauty. The field of Waterloo is as fresh in my memory now as when I looked over it from the side of the Belgic Lion, more than four years ago; and the panorama of Venice is almost as distinct and as fully pictured in my mind this night as when I looked down on that faded gem of the sea from the graceful tower of St. Mark's. I know not if this be a common feeling with travellers, or if others are wont to derive from it the same pleasure; with me it makes travel a perennial source of enjoyment.

When I returned, I found my companions, with the horses and servants, all ready, so we mounted at once and rode off amid the salâms and good wishes of the sheikh and a crowd of retainers who had gathered round us. A liberal *bakhshish* had almost overcome Muslem fanaticism. The marching orders for the day were, first to Sŭlkhad

and then back to Kureiyeh. The latter place being only some two hours distant, we resolved to send the servants and baggage direct, and I gave to them our letter of introduction to the Druze chief: by this separation our party was considerably weakened, and at a time too when numbers might be of advantage; but still, in case of an encounter with Bedawîn, we considered the luggage and mules would prove as much of an encumbrance and temptation as the servants might be of advantage. There still remained five of us well mounted and well armed; so that no ordinary band of Arabs would venture to attack us. We were informed that the whole district through which our route lay, though thickly studded with towns and villages, was altogether uninhabited. The people of Busrah stated that of late it had been much frequented by small bands of Bedawy marauders, watching an opportunity to descend upon some border village, or carry off some unguarded flock.

At 8·40 we left the sheikh's house and were conducted along the main street eastward over vast heaps of rubbish and stones: I here observed several buildings with porticos of small columns which I had not previously seen. The whole eastern part of the city appears to have been thickly dotted with public buildings; and the finest of the private residences were also situated here. At the spot where we left the ruins the ancient wall is completely prostrate. A few hundred yards from the city we observed a reservoir on our left, still larger than that referred to above. Our path was along the Roman road, which runs in a perfectly straight line (S. 77° E.) to Sŭlkhad, having a gentle ascent from the gate of Busrah. Our servants turned to the left at the reservoir, taking the direct road to Kureiyeh,

which bears N. 84° E. The soil here is exceedingly rich, and the fences of the large rectangular fields can be traced over the whole country.

We rode on at a steady pace up the easy slope. The rain of the previous day had been just sufficient to make the soft mouldy soil firm beneath our horses' feet; and we consequently preferred the smooth fields to the hard pavement of the ancient road. The ruined village of Burd, conspicuously situated on the summit of a swell, now attracted our attention; and as its buildings appeared large and ornamental, we determined to gallop over to it. As we approached nearer however we were able to distinguish a number of figures moving back and forth among the half-ruined houses. Mahmûd thought that some shepherd with his flock had taken refuge there from the late rains; but it soon became evident that they were men, and not sheep or goats, who now climbed to the terraced roofs apparently to watch our approach. We all of course pronounced them Bedawîn, as we had been told the whole country was uninhabited. That Bedawîn should be in such a place at such an hour seemed strange, and the natural conclusion was that they were bound on no peaceful errand. For us either to escape now or pass unnoticed was impossible, except indeed we should wheel about and gallop back to Busrah, and this did not suit our purposes. Mahmûd at once called a halt, and said he wished to give us a few hints about Arab warfare, as we would now or during the day most probably have an encounter with them. His first advice was that we should never attempt to run under any circumstances; "as," he said, "their horses are fleet, and a flying foe always gives them fresh courage. Whatever their number be," he

added, "let us meet them fearlessly: if they allow us to pass, well; but if they attack us, we must fire upon them, it is our only chance; and let no one fire until he is sure of at least bringing down a horse." This was no very comfortable address to men of peace like ourselves, and we half wished we had gone with our servants; but wishes were useless at this stage: we had calculated on a clear route, and now it seemed we were to be disappointed; and thus, while hoping the best, we prepared for the worst. We assured Mahmûd he might rely upon our standing by him whatever occurred. Turning to the village, we saw rather formidable numbers collected on the house-tops, while some horses appeared picketed below. Mahmûd bound up his flowing *kefiyeh*, loosened his sword in its scabbard, and carefully examined his pistols. Desiring us to await his return, he galloped across the fields to the ruin, now less than half a mile on our right. We observed a man coming out to meet him, and a few seconds only elapsed, when, waving his hand for us to proceed, he set out at a quick pace toward our road again. Our fancied foes proved to be several families of peasants who had come here only a few days previously to cultivate the fine fields around.

We passed Bûrd at 9·30. Immediately beyond it the country becomes very stony, but all the loose fragments have been carefully collected into large piles and broad dikes; and the intervening patches of soil completely cleared. We had been ascending gradually from Busrah over fertile ground, having a uniform and very gentle slope. Now, however, the aspect of the country changed completely. The whole has a savage and barren appear-

'ance on account of the vast quantities of stones, while it is broken and undulating, with rugged tells at intervals. We had reached the southern spurs of the mountain-range, which stretch out far into the plain. Still continuing to ascend gradually we reached at 11·10 a few large patches of clear soil, where a number of Druzes were engaged in agricultural pursuits—each man carrying his gun slung across his shoulders, and pistols in his belt. One might well feel surprised that they should cultivate with such industry and care little patches like these among the wilderness of rocks, while thousands of acres of the richest soil lie waste only a few miles westward. The reason is obvious. Arab horsemen cannot so easily make a *raid* in broken ground, and Druze muskets are doubly dreaded behind rocks. From this place we saw the extensive ruins of Kureiyeh, nearly two miles distant on our left, situated in the centre of a broad stony valley. About half an hour on the right of our road is the deserted town of Beka.

We soon afterwards gained the summit of the broad ridge from whence we had a commanding view over the whole country. This ridge runs out from the mountains in a south-westerly direction. On its north-western side is the broad valley of the Zêdy, in which Kureiyeh and several other towns and villages are situated. On the south and south-east the ground stretches away almost level, and is intersected at the distance of about a mile by the deep bed of a winter torrent flowing south-west. At 10·35 we had the deserted town of Deffen two miles on our right, and three-quarters of an hour afterwards the village of Muneidhirah was a few hundred yards distant

on our left. From the moment we gained the summit of the hill the ruins of Sŭlkhad formed a conspicuous object directly in front. The ancient road runs like an arrow over the stony ground in the interval, direct towards the towering cone, on the top of which the old castle stands. The whole slope along its southern side is covered with the buildings of the city; tapering minarets and square towers shoot up at intervals over the terraced roofs. After passing Muneidhirah we crossed two little rivulets winding among the rocks in very tortuous channels, and then set out at a faster pace, urging our horses to a round canter wherever the road was sufficiently clear. We soon commenced to ascend the hill. The slope, gradual and gentle at first, becomes steep, and we were glad at last to wind back and forth among the tombs of a long-forgotten people that here cover the hill-side. At 12·15 we reached the *lower* moat which encircles the whole castle hill, and turning to the right we rode along it, above the ruins of the city, till we reached a point on the south side where a narrow lane turns down among the houses; following this for a few hundred yards, we at last arrived at a spacious paved court in front of a large mosk, and there dismounted.

Here we picketed our horses and left Mahmûd in charge of them. He told us, ere we attempted to explore, to put our pistols in our belts, lest some hidden Arabs should suddenly pounce upon us. The building beside which we now stood is apparently one of the largest in the town. It is square, and its flat roof is supported by four rows of square piers supporting arches. The windows are very small, and are formed of one stone, pierced in pattern-work.

Over the door is a bunch of grapes in relief, badly sculptured. According to Burckhardt this mosk was erected in A.H. 620[1] (A.D. 1223), but I did not see the inscription from which he got this date. In front of the building stands an isolated minaret of considerable height. Round it, about twenty feet from the ground, is a row of white stones, perhaps marble, on which is a long Arabic inscription. The minaret is evidently of recent date, but the stones of which it and the surrounding buildings are constructed were taken from the ruins of more ancient structures.

My first object being to get a general view of the city as well as the immediately surrounding country, I ascended the terraced roof of the mosk, from which I was able to command the whole panorama. I estimated the circumference of the city at from two to three miles, including the castle. There is no building of great extent or architectural beauty now remaining. A number of square towers and a few mosks are the only public structures. A large number of the private dwellings are still perfect, with their massive stone walls, stone roofs, and stone doors. Three or four hundred families could settle in this place at any time, and find ample accommodation. There are no fountains in or around the city, nor is there any stream or even winter torrent; but on the eastern side of the castle hill are large reservoirs. While I was thus engaged Mr. Barnett wandered through the streets and lanes in search of inscriptions, but without success. Burckhardt says he saw several which were so much defaced as to be illegible. On his return we all ascended to the castle,

[1] Travels in Syria, p. 100.

situated on the summit of a conical hill, from three to four hundred feet above the city. This hill was at one time the crater of a volcano, and its sides are still in many places covered with light cinders and blocks of lava similar to those on Tell Shûhba. Buckingham observed these remains of ancient convulsions, but strangely enough ascribes them to the destruction of the castle by fire, though there is not the slightest mark of fire on the walls, either external or internal! Still his remark is quite correct, "that there are all around it traces of cinders and ashes in such quantities as could only have been produced by a fire of great intensity and some duration."[2] The fire most probably burned for many a long century; and some idea of its intensity may be formed by those who have stood on the brink of Etna or Vesuvius. One other remark I may be allowed to make in reference to Buckingham. A sketch is given in his book, purporting to represent the castle and ruins of Sŭlkhad, and it is copied and beautifully engraved in Keith's 'Land of Israel.' Now, this sketch, be it known, does not bear the most remote resemblance to this country, city, hill, or castle. Fancy sketches may be tolerated where they are not calculated to mislead as to facts, but to represent a *bridge of four arches*, and a *broad river or lake*, at a place where there is not one drop of water save that collected in reservoirs during the winter, is carrying the ideal a little too far! His sketch of Kunawât, also copied in Dr. Keith's work, is just as purely fanciful, and is so utterly unlike the character of the ruins there, that it never *could*

[2] Travels among Arab Tribes, p. 216.

have been taken on the spot, *or by any man who had ever visited it.*

On our way to the castle, after passing the houses of the town, we came to the moat which encircles the base of the conical tell, and contributes to render it more uniform and regular in shape. Crossing this, we ascended the steep and smooth esplanade, on reaching the top of which we came to another and much deeper moat, encompassing the castle itself. The base of rock on which the fortress stands is elevated high above the top of the esplanade exterior to the moat, and the scarp is faced with finely hewn stones, built up at an angle of about seventy degrees. The castle walls tower perpendicularly over this; they are constructed of large blocks of stone carefully hewn in the rustic style, resembling those in the castles of Damascus and Busrah. In several places on the exterior walls are lions sculptured in relief. Two of these, facing each other, of colossal proportions, may be seen on the west side; and two others, not far distant, have a palm-tree between them. These sculptures are found at various elevations on the walls, and most of them evidently occupy the places they were originally designed for, though I noticed one pair turned upside down. High up on the wall is a beautiful Arabic inscription, encircling the whole building. The entrance gateway is on the eastern side, where a bridge at one time spanned the moat, and appears to have been standing in Burckhardt's time,[3] but is now prostrate. We were obliged to descend into the moat and crawl up the broken scarp to the gate, now also in part ruinous. On a stone on the right side of it

[3] Travels in Syria, p. 100.

is the following inscription in badly formed characters, and nearly obliterated. I copied it with much difficulty, and I here insert it, as it seems to have hitherto escaped the notice of travellers.

ΑΓΑΘΗΤΥΧΗ
ΘΑΜΟCΝΑΕΜ /////////
CΑΘΑΟC·CΙΧΜΟ ////////Γ
ΒΑCCΟCΟΥΛΠΙΟΥ
ΒΟΡΔΟCCΑ ////////
ΕΠΚΚΟΠΟΙΕΚΤ
ΩΝΤΟΥΘΕΟΥΕΚ | ΤΙCΑ
ΕΤΟΥC $\overline{\text{ΡΜ}}$

If it could only be proved that the stone on which this inscription is found was originally intended for the place it now occupies, we have here a most important fact established, namely, that the gateway was erected in the year of the Bostrian era 140, or A.D. 246. I think there can be little doubt that the castle existed even previous to the Roman age. There are other traces of Roman work here also. Over the interior gateway is an eagle with expanded wings, and near it are two capitals with busts sculptured in relief. Passing the gateway, we entered an arched passage, running round a portion of the southern side, and communicating with the interior by small doors now choked up with ruins. On reaching the end of this vault we crawled through a low door, and then, climbing over heaps of hewn stones, reached the interior, which is one vast confused mass of ruins. Not one solitary apartment, so far as we could discover, has escaped the destroyer. On the south-western side two or three

halls are still in such a state that some idea may be formed of their dimensions. In one of the lofty towers I approached a low doorway with the intention of crawling through it. I observed, however, several fresh footmarks in the dust before it, as if some men had only recently gone in, and, as I could see no trace of their egress, I remained satisfied with putting my head within the door, and as the interior was perfectly dark I was the more reconciled to turn aside. We all knew that we were now not merely beyond the bounds of civilisation, but also of habitation; and that this very city had at a comparatively recent period been deserted by its inhabitants in consequence of the attacks of the wild sons of the desert, who acknowledge no power but that of the sword. Our own personal safety depended on our escaping notice, or our ability to meet and defend ourselves against such as might observe us. We found two other Greek inscriptions among the ruins, but they had been previously taken by Burckhardt, with a third which I did not see. One of them is a monumental tablet, and has the date 264, A.D. 370. The greater part of the exterior walls is still in good repair, but some places are broken down, and the masonry of the scarp is also broken. In form the castle is a polygon, but the outer wall of the moat, or counterscarp, is a perfect circle, whose circumference I estimated at half a mile.

From the summit of this noble castle I obtained an extensive and interesting view, and was able to take in at a glance the whole features of the surrounding country, which lay spread out around me like a vast panorama. The results of my careful survey I will give as briefly

as possible, and it may not be considered unimportant if I describe with some minuteness the character of the scenery and the topographical features of the landscape, as the geography of this region is almost wholly unknown, the brief notes of Burckhardt containing the only information we possess. Important errors, into which the constructor of the map attached to his Travels has fallen, I shall have occasion to note and correct hereafter when giving a general view of the topography of the southern part of these mountains.

The castle of Sŭlkhad stands on an almost isolated conical hill, at the southern extremity of the range of Jebel Haurân. Northward of this place the ridge is broad, with gently sloping sides; it is not lofty, but at intervals there are several high conical peaks. The sides and summits of the mountains were at one time carefully cultivated, and the stone fences that enclose the fields can still be traced. The ridge gradually increases in elevation from Sŭlkhad to Kuleib, which bears N. 5° E. Down the centre of this ridge from near the base of the latter peak runs a shallow wady, about half an hour in breadth. On the extremity of the eastern ridge thus formed, which is also the most elevated, stands the castle; the western is that which we crossed in coming from Busrah. The whole country from the south-west to the west is an elevated undulating plain, dotted with many deserted towns and occasional conical tells. Immediately beneath Sŭlkhad the eastern ridge sinks down into a plain, in which are several deserted villages, and the traces of fields and gardens. South by west, nearly an hour distant, is a lofty tell with a deserted town on its eastern slope,

and a short distance east of it is another tell, with terraced sides. On both these tells, and in the whole vale intervening and the plain on each side, are many trees, apparently the remains of extensive fig-orchards. Due south there is a slight depression in the plain, with a gentle swell on each side, running as far as the eye can see in a straight line. In it I noticed several ruined or deserted towns and large villages. To the south-east runs an ancient road, straight as an arrow, across the fine plain, passing the base of a little tell at the distance of half an hour, and then another nearly an hour beyond with a large building on its summit. Our guide informed us that this road extends to Bŭsra on the Persian Gulf: the same statement I afterwards heard from others; and the historian Ibn S'aîd, cited by Abulfeda, says that from this castle a king's highway ran to Irak, and that by it Baghdad may be reached in ten days.[4] On the plain extending from the south to the east I counted fourteen towns or large villages, none of them more than twelve miles distant, and almost all of them, so far as I could see by the aid of a telescope, still habitable, like Sŭlkhad, but completely deserted. The houses in some of them I could distinctly see standing perfect as when recently finished; and those strange square towers, so conspicuous in all the ancient villages of the Haurân, are here too. We learn from Arab authors that there has not been a settled inhabitant in these plains for more than five hundred years,[5] and we may thus form some idea of how admirably fitted the houses are to resist the destroying hand of time. The whole country as far as the

[4] Tab. Syr., ed. Reisk, p. 106. [5] Id.

eye can see is volcanic. All the stones that are strewn over the soil are porous trap, and the rock that occasionally crops up is of the same kind.

The age and history of this castle are, like those of many other structures in this land, involved in obscurity: no historic record or monumental tablet has yet been found tending to throw light on its origin. Burckhardt, indeed, found an inscription which, could it be relied on, would give us the required information. It is to the effect that the castle was built during the reign of S'aîd ed-Dîn abu Takmar. This directs us to the era of the crusades, at which time no doubt the fortress may have been repaired; but it is sufficiently evident that it must have been founded long prior to that age. The character of the masonry, the sculptured lions, the eagle over the entrance gateway, and the circular arches, are sufficient evidences that it could not have been constructed by Saracenic architects. It is no uncommon thing to find these Saracen princes thus patching up venerable structures, and taking to themselves the whole credit of their erection.

That the present *Sŭlkhad* is identical with the ancient SALCAH can scarcely be doubted. The names are nearly the same, and the position agrees well with the descriptions given in the Bible "All Bashan unto Salcah" is a phrase used in Josh. xiii. 11; and from it and two other passages in which this town is mentioned[6] we conclude that it was situated on the extreme border of the ancient kingdom of Bashan. And by comparing this with the narrative contained in 1 Chron. ch. v., we can fix with considerable accuracy its position. In the latter place

[6] Deut. iii. 10; Josh. xii. 5.

the sacred writer gives an account of the possessions and conquests of the tribe of Reuben—how they were enabled to extend their borders *eastward* "unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates, throughout all the east of Gilead;" and he then states that the children of Gad dwelt over against them, in the land of Bashan *unto Salcah.*" Now I think it is evident from this that Salcah must have stood on the eastern border of the possessions of Gad; and as it also marked the extremity of Bashan, it must have been situated in the south-eastern angle of that kingdom. It is said in another place that the half-tribe of Manasseh possessed *all Bashan;* but this is not necessarily opposed to the words of this passage, which probably only mean that the Gadites occupied the fine plain along the southern border of Bashan as far eastward as Salcah. The position of the ancient Salcah is thus clearly defined, and it answers in every respect to that of the present Sŭlkhad.[7]

After this city fell into the hands of the Israelites, and was mentioned by their historians as a boundary-mark, we have no reference to it in the Bible. The inscriptions found on its tombs and monuments are the next most ancient memorials of its existence. On one of the grave-stones is an inscription equivalent to the date A.D. 196. This was during the reign of Septimius Severus, whose eastern conquests are well known. It appears that his power was felt and acknowledged even in this corner of Arabia. The commanding position of this fortress would doubtless early attract the attention of the Roman governors of Bostra, and be selected as an important military

[7] Gesenius, Heb. Lexicon, s. v. סלכה.

position in guarding the frontiers. Another inscription, as we have already seen, has the date A.D. 246; and a third A.D. 370. These show that the town existed during the period of Roman dominion in Bostra. The name is found in the Onomasticon of Eusebius, or rather of Hieronimus, for Eusebius does not mention it; and even Hieronimus seems to have been ignorant of its true position, though he supposes that it must have stood on the southern border of the half-tribe of Manasseh beyond the Jordan.[8] William of Tyre mentions this city and castle in connexion with Bostra, and says that it was never captured by the crusaders; and this proves that they could not have been the authors of the sculptured lions found upon the walls.[9] This necessarily leads us to date back the castle to an age preceding the Saracen conquest of Syria. In the days of Nûr ed-Dîn it was nearly falling into the hands of King Baldwin III.; the governor of Busrah having attempted, as has been already stated, to deliver these two strong fortresses to the crusaders.[1] They were saved by the loyalty of his wife, who gave timely notice to Nûr ed-Dîn of the intentions of her husband. The Christian knights and soldiers who had been sent across the Jordan and the thirsty plain beyond it, to take possession of the castles, well nigh perished in the attempt.[1] Arab writers speak of Sŭlkhad as a place of great strength, containing a large castle, and being one of the chief towns in the Haurân.[2]

[8] Onomasticon, s. v. Salecha, p. 135.

[9] Will. Tyr. Hist. in Gesta Dei per Francos, p. 893.

[1] Id. pp. 893-8.

[2] Abulfed. Tab. Syr., ed. Reisk, p. 106. This geographer calls it Sarkhad—صرخد.

We learn from Arab historians that the country around Sŭlkhad was once rich in vines;[3] and travellers of the present day can see how admirably adapted are the gentle slopes of the mountains, and the sunny plains along their base, for the growth of the vine and the fig. All the declivities that are too steep for plain cultivation are regularly terraced. The stones that thickly covered the soil in some places have been carefully collected into heaps and built up in the fences of the fields and vineyards. It is evident that the whole region extending from Busrah to Kureiyeh, and from Kureiyeh to Sŭlkhad, and from this place as far as the eye can see eastward and southward, was at one time as closely cultivated, and as densely populated, as are now the western slopes of Libanus. In the thirteenth century the vineyards of Sŭlkhad and the gardens of Busrah were still celebrated in Syria;[4] and only about *two* centuries ago the graceful minaret that now stands beside the large mosk in this town was erected, and the place must then have had a large population. A few years before Burckhardt visited this country there were some settled inhabitants in Sŭlkhad and 'Orman,[5] but now they are completely deserted. Kureiyeh is the nearest inhabited village. Every year, in fact, is narrowing the borders of the settled inhabitants, and unless a new system of government is ere long adopted the whole of the country east of the Jordan must be abandoned by those who cultivate the soil. Nowhere on earth is there such a melancholy example of the fatal effects of tyranny, rapacity, and misrule, as that here exhibited. Fields, vineyards, pastures, villages, cities—

[3] Abulfed. p. 105. [4] Id. [5] Travels in Syria, p. 100.

all alike deserted; and the few inhabitants that remain behind the barrier of rocks and mountains drag out a miserable existence, oppressed by the robbers of the desert on the one hand, and the still more formidable robbers of the government on the other. The Druzes form the only exception to this—their courage, their union, and their position, concentrated in the strongholds of the mountains, enable them to brave, when occasion demands it, both Turks and Bedawîn.

Here again we had reached the boundary of our prescribed route, and were forced to retrace our steps. With fourteen deserted towns in view on one side, and at least as many more on the other, it was not without feelings of regret and reluctance we turned away. No traveller has hitherto traversed this fertile land or these forsaken cities. Sŭlkhad has formed the utmost point attained by the very few who have visited the kingdom of Bashan. This seems strange, since Syria is visited by hundreds every year, longing for adventure and thirsting after fame. It is much to be desired that some one, with the exactness and learning of a Robinson, combined with the enterprise and enthusiasm of a Burckhardt or a Layard, should undertake the survey of the eastern borders of Bashan and Moab. It would be a tour of great interest, both in a geographical and antiquarian point of view, to go eastward from Damascus to the Tellûl, and then south-east to the Săfā. From thence a south-western course might be taken to survey the plain and explore the deserted towns along the eastern base of the Jebel Haurân; after which those around Sŭlkhad could be examined, and the line of the ancient road followed for about a day and a half or two days; and then,

sweeping round to the right, the traveller could traverse the rich plains of Moab, visiting the ruins of the ancient Beth-gamul, and such other cities as still exist. The whole tour might be accomplished in about a month; and during the spring season, when the Bedawîn are spread over the plains, it would not be attended with any great difficulty.

At 2·25 we remounted our horses, and turned towards Kureiyeh. Mahmûd did not seem well acquainted with the road, and so led us back some distance along the same path we had traversed in the morning. Turning to the right, we rode past the deserted village of Muneidhirah. Here are, as usual, a square tower, and many houses with their stone doors and roofs, ready for inhabitants; but long since forsaken. Beside it is a good fountain, the stream from which flows to the south-west across the ancient road. We reached the fountain at 3·20; we recrossed the low ridge, winding among great heaps of loose stones, piled up by the hands of the industrious of former ages, and descended to the wady of Abu Hamâka. At 4·10 we crossed the stream that flows through it, which is one of the tributaries of the Zêdy. The country has a savage and forbidding aspect: there is nothing visible around but stones and jagged black rocks, which seem to cover the whole vale and hill-sides. We at last struck an ancient paved road, which appears to have connected Kureiyeh and Sŭlkhad, probably running past the large ruined town of 'Ayûn. We reached Kureiyeh at 4·30. We were conducted to the centre of the town, where we found a large assembly of elders prepared to bid us welcome. As I rode up I looked round for the celebrated chief, but

none appeared to answer the description I had heard of him. Just as I dismounted, however, a portly figure in a fur-lined robe stepped out from a gateway and gave us the usual salutation. The whole assembly rose, but our host, requesting us to follow, led the way through a dirty court-yard into a still dirtier reception-room.

Sheikh *Ismaîl el-Atrash* ("Ishmael the Deaf") is universally acknowledged to be the bravest of a brave race. He far excels in personal prowess all the other chiefs, and has thus obtained an influence which neither his rank nor his wealth could have secured. He is not descended, like his brethren, from an ancient and noble family; but, a soldier of fortune, he has carved his way to power by his sword. His personal appearance at once indicates the man of undaunted courage and inflexible will. He is little above middle height, and did not therefore appear to great advantage beside some of his present visitors; but the short neck, broad shoulders, and *set* walk, give evidence of enormous strength. His features are small and well formed, his eye steady, and his whole bearing that of a man perfectly conscious of his own power, and confident in his own strength and skill. A long beard of a dark sandy colour gives him rather a venerable appearance, which is also heightened by the ample folds of a large silk turban. In conversation he is brief in his statements, and briefer still in his replies. He conversed freely of the late war and of the prospect of its renewal, and he stated, as all the other chiefs had likewise done, the firm determination of the Druzes never to give conscripts. Kureiyeh, we were now informed, had been the head-quarters of the Druzes during the late war, and not

any part of the Lejah, as I had before understood. When an attack was to be made, or a caravan of supplies to be cut off, from this place the expedition always set out; and it appeared from the whole conversation that the Druzes had their spies in the city, who gave them accurate information of every projected movement of the troops, and of every convoy of ammunition or provision about to be sent to the army. This I gathered at the time from various replies of the sheikh in answer to my questions, and I have since obtained full confirmation of its accuracy.

I asked our host on what kind of terms he was with the great tribes of Bedawîn, who, during the spring and autumn months, encompass his little territory. He stated that, while there is in general a *formal* friendship between the Druzes and the desert tribes, yet forays and reprisals are of almost weekly occurrence. I inquired whether all the villages in the Haurân paid *black-mail* to the Bedawîn. He replied that all the Muslem villages did so; but that the Druzes exacted tribute from them for the privilege of permitting them to water their flocks at their fountains and reservoirs.

In warfare this chief wears a steel helmet and a large coat of chain armour of great weight, and so dense that it is said not only to be spear but bullet proof. His scimitar he also showed us; it is long and heavy, and of the finest Damascus steel. This is the only instance of armour being worn I have ever known in this country. I have sometimes heard that a few of the great Bedawy chiefs wear it, but I have never seen it with them.

Kureiyeh is situated in a broad valley at the south-western base of the Jebel Haurân, between the rivulets

Zêdy and Abu Hamâka. The ruins are of great extent, but their circumference I was not able to determine with any degree of accuracy, as there is no commanding spot, from which a view can be obtained of the whole, and the shortness of the time at my disposal prevented me from going round the ancient city. The statement of Buckingham that, in its flourishing days, Kureiyeh was as large as Busrah, is incorrect; and Burckhardt's estimate, of about five hundred houses, is, on the other hand, far too low. It appeared to me, by walking through it, to be about as large as Sŭlkhad. The houses have the same general appearance as those in the other villages, with their massive stone walls, stone roofs, and stone doors. There is no structure of any extent or architectural beauty now remaining; but in the streets and lanes are many fragments of columns and other evidences of former grandeur. There are several square towers of great antiquity among the ruins: on one of them is a Greek inscription which I attempted to copy, but it was so much broken that I could not decipher it. In the centre of the town is a large pool or reservoir, on the west side of which is a singular structure. A series of straight benches, rising up like those of a theatre, have a covering over them supported on three ranges of columns of very unequal height—the lower row resting on the ground; the second on the middle bench; and the third on the upper bench. The whole is in bad taste, and was constructed at a comparatively late period out of the ruins of some other building. On the front of one of the benches is a Greek inscription, from which we learn that this reservoir (λιμνη) was built at the expense of the town in the year 190, A.D. 296. On another stone

in a building near it is an inscription, with the date 433; but this I consider to be of the era of the Seleucidæ, and not, like the others, the Bostrian era: it is therefore equivalent to A.D. 121.[6] Upon a large building on the east side of the town, called by the present inhabitants the *church*, there is also a short inscription with a very early date, 34 of the Bostrian era, A.D. 140.[7]

The whole country around Kureiyeh is covered with heaps of loose stones, and consequently the place is secure against any incursion of the Arabs. The rivulet Abu Hamâka has its source among the mountains eastward. We were informed that there are some ruins at the fountain, and this is probably the place passed by Buckingham on his way to Sŭlkhad, which he represents as the source of the Zêdy.[8] The latter stream runs in a wild ravine considerably north of Kureiyeh, and unites with the former about two miles westward; several other smaller tributaries then fall in from the neighbourhood of Hebrân, and the rivulet winds across the plain to Jemurrîn, from whence it continues in a north-western course till it joins the Sheriat el-Maudhûr (*Yarmuk*) a few miles south of Mezarîb. The Kuleib is distinctly seen from Kureiyeh,

[6] The inscription beside the reservoir may be seen in both Burckhardt and Buckingham, but the other here referred to has not hitherto been copied; I therefore insert it in this place:—

ΥΠΕΡCωΤΗΡΙΑ
CCAIOYΦΙΛΟΚ
ΛΟΥΤΟΥΤΟΝ
ΕΚΤΙCΘΑΙCΣ
ΙϠΕΤ^{S}ΥΑΓ

[7] This inscription has not before been published; it is as follows:—

ΑΝΗΛω
ΘΗCΑΝΧΥ
CΤΟΥCΛΔ

[8] Travels among Arab Tribes, p. 213.

bearing N. 30° E.; and the ruins of Hebrân form a prominent object, situated on the summit of a lofty rugged peak nearly in the same line.[9]

February 8th.—We rose with the dawn, and immediately resumed our examination of the ruins. Even at this early hour the Druze women were busily engaged in their pastoral labours; and a scene of bustle, industry, plenty, and filth presented itself to us such as we had not yet witnessed. Vast flocks of cows, horses, sheep, and goats filled every court-yard, and blocked up every street and lane. The ordinary paths were thus quite impracticable; and we followed the example of the active women, who walked along the tops of rickety walls and over terraced roofs. We were no little surprised to see the agility with which the women passed from place to place in this way, many of them with pails of milk on their heads, and others with their children astride upon their shoulders. The youthful cavaliers kept a firm seat, now and then grasping the towering *tantûr*,[1] as their mothers skipped over some pool or scaled a wall.

In the enumeration of the cities in the plains of Moab upon which judgment is pronounced by the prophet Jere-

[9] From this place I took some important bearings, calculated to fix, when combined with those taken at Busrah and Sûlkhad, the positions of all the principal towns and villages in this section of country. As I have laid down these on the map accompanying this work, I do not consider it necessary to insert the bearings. I may remark, however, that Burd, Busrah, Jemurrîn, Ghussân, and several others less important, were in sight.

[1] This singular ornament is generally worn by the Druze women in the Haurân. It is a tapering tube of silver, sometimes of gold, from *six inches* to *two feet* long, balanced by means of weights on the front part of the head, and thus resembling the horn of the fabled unicorn. It is always covered with a veil, and is only worn by married women.

miah we find one which, in name and situation, appears to agree with this ancient site.[2] KERIOTH is mentioned in connection with *Beth-gamul* and *Bozrah;* and here we find the ruins of KUREIYEH, on the side of the plain, only five miles distant from the latter city. If the soundness of my arguments for the identity of Bozrah and Beth-gamul be admitted, there can scarcely be a doubt entertained that this is the site of Kerioth. It would seem to be implied in the words of the prophet, in another part of the same denunciation, that Kerioth was a strong city;[3] and the position of the present ruins in the midst of a wilderness of rocks would agree well with such a description. It struck me forcibly also, while wandering through the streets and lanes, that many of the houses still standing bear every mark of the most remote antiquity. The few square towers and fragments of buildings, which inscriptions prove to have been erected in the first centuries of the Christian era, are modern in comparison with the massive walls and colossal stone doors of the private dwellings. The simplicity of the plan of these structures, combined with their low roofs, the ponderous blocks of roughly-hewn stones of which they are built, and the great thickness of the walls, seems to point to a period far earlier than the Roman age, and possibly even antecedent to the conquest of this land by the Israelites. We are likewise informed by the sacred historian that in the land of Argob there were threescore great cities with gates and bars.

[2] Jer. xlviii. 23, 24; see also Amos ii. 2. The Arabic name of this place, قريت, is identical with the Hebrew קריות.

[3] Jer. xlviii. 41.

These had apparently been constructed by the Rephaims, the aborigines of this country ;[4] and the houses of Kureiyeh appear to be just such structures as this race of giants would rear up. The huge doors and gates of stone, some of which are nearly *eighteen inches* in thickness, and the ponderous bars, the places for which can still be seen, are in every way characteristic of a period when architecture was in its infancy, when manual labour was of little comparative value, and when strength and security were the great requisites. Time produces but little effect on such buildings as these. The heavy stone flags of the roofs, resting on the massive walls, render the whole structure as firm as if built of solid masonry; and the black basalt rock of which they are constructed is almost as hard as iron. May not the language of Ritter be strictly true, "that these buildings remain as eternal witnesses of the conquest of Bashan by Jehovah"?[5] How a race of shepherds, unaccustomed to war, should gain such victories over a nation of warriors, and subdue such strongholds, seems strange to man, but the hand of the Lord was with them! We have in this place, perhaps, some of the most ancient structures of which the world can boast; and in viewing them the mind is led back to patriarchal times, when the kings of the East warred with the Rephaims in Ashteroth-Karnaim, and with the Emims in the plain of Kiriathaim.[6] The temples and tombs of Upper Egypt are of great interest, as the works of one of the most ancient as well as one of the most enlightened nations of a

[4] Compare Gen. xiv. 5, with Deut. iii. 3-14, Josh. xiii. 12, and 1 Kings iv. 13.

[5] Pal. und Syr. ii. 964.

[6] Gen. xiv. 5.

former age; and the palaces and sculptures of Nineveh are still more intensely interesting as the memorials of a great and powerful city, now exhumed, after lying mouldering and unknown for near two thousand years; but the massive dwellings and stone gates of Kureiyeh, and the other towns of this region, scarcely yield in importance or interest to the monuments of either Egypt or Assyria. It is true they are antiquities of another kind, and cannot vie with those in splendour or extent; yet they are the memorials of a race of giants that has now been extinct for more than three thousand years, and of which Og, king of Bashan, was one of the last representatives; and they form, I believe, the only specimens the world can afford of the ordinary private dwellings of remote antiquity. The proud monuments designed by the genius and reared up by the wealth of imperial Rome are fast mouldering away to utter ruin in this land; but the simple buildings of a far earlier age in many places remain perfect as when the workman had completed them. It is worthy of remark here that the towns and castles of this country were counted ancient even in the days of the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus, who thus writes about the region east of the Jordan:—"Fortresses and strong castles have been erected by the *ancient inhabitants* among the retired mountains and forests to guard against the attacks of their neighbours. Here also, in the midst of *numerous towns*, are some great cities, such as Bostra and Gerasa, encompassed by massive walls."[7]. . . . But the land of Moab has now become a desert; the cities of Moab are

[7] Am. Mar. Hist. xiv.; see also Ritter, Pal. und Syr. ii. 974.

now forsaken; the palaces of Kerioth have been destroyed.[8] The words of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah are now literally fulfilled: "The spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy vintage; joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab I have caused the wine to fail from the wine-press; none shall tread with shouting."[9]

Having breakfasted, we prepared to resume our journey at once; but were detained a few minutes waiting for letters the sheikh wished us to convey to Mr. Wood in Damascus. He had on the previous day mentioned to me the difficulty he experienced in transmitting important communications to the city, and I volunteered to take charge of such as he might choose to send. He thanked me, and remarked that there was little fear of Kurds or Turks taking them from me. But it so happened that ere forty hours had passed these letters, with other things of more value, were taken from me by force.

Our intention being to reach Nejrân in the Lejah that day, some conversation naturally arose about our route. We wished to go by Hebrân in order to see more of the country; but Mahmûd said the servants could not accomplish so much. I replied they could go by the plain, and we would follow our own course. New objections now

[8] Amos ii. 2.

[9] Jer. xlviii. 32, 33. It is worthy of remark, as a striking fulfilment of this prophecy, that the figs and grapes that still grow in the orchards and vineyards around Sŭlkhad are every year rifled by the bands of Bedawîn. It was these acts of robbery, more than dread of personal violence, that caused Sŭlkhad and other places near it to be deserted by their inhabitants. Not unfrequently the grain crops of the people of Busrah are completely eaten up by the passing flocks of the Arabs. How wonderfully minute were the predictions of the prophet,—"The spoiler is fallen upon thy summer-fruits and upon thy vintage"!

arose, and all present seemed anxious to relieve Mahmûd of a long and hard ride over not the best of roads; and *they* could not, of course, see any reason why we should select the way by Hebrân. I saw there was no use in arguing the point, and held my peace; whereupon they all agreed at once that we should take the road across the plain.

The letters came at last, and we bade adieu to the warlike sheikh. When we were all mounted, I said to the servants, "Go you straight to Nejrân, and tell sheikh Kâsem that we will be with him at sunset;" and then, turning to Mahmûd, I requested him to lead us in the way to Hebrân. Not a word of remonstrance was uttered, nor a remark made; all saluted us respectfully as we passed, and uttered the usual parting benediction, "*Be îmân Illâh*"—"In the faith of God." It was 8·40 when we rode out from the ruins. Our path led up a rocky and barren declivity in a north-east direction. At 9·28 we crossed the wild ravine of the Zêdy, with a large and rapid torrent now rushing through it, over a rugged bed. On its northern bank, a little to the right of the place we crossed it, is a small ruined village; but we did not stop to examine it. We had hitherto travelled far to the east of the direction of Hebrân, in order to avoid the deep ravines, and to reach this spot, where alone, it appears, the wady Zêdy can be crossed by animals. We now turned to the left, and rode over rugged heights towards the Kuleib, which rose up in front a magnificent cone. At 10 o'clock we reached a deep ravine coming from the eastern base of that mountain. Its banks are lined with oaks, and the hills around are covered with evergreen

forests. After riding along its left bank for five minutes, we turned suddenly to the left down a zigzag path, crossed the stream, and, ascending the lofty ridge on its opposite side, reached the ruins of Hebrân at 10·15.

Hebrân is situated on the summit of a mountain-ridge which equals, if it does not surpass, in altitude any of the peaks south of the Kuleib. It thus commands an extensive view not only over the plain to the west and south, but likewise over the swelling hills eastward. I found it thus to be a point of vast importance for making a series of observations by which to connect the towns and villages in the western plain with those along the southern declivities of the mountain-range. The whole of our previous route from 'Ary to Busrah and from Busrah to Sŭlkhad now lay before me. Less than two miles below me on the mountain-side (S. 84° W.) is the village of 'Afîneh,[1] whose scattered ruins occupy a fine position on the brow of the deep ravine which skirts the eastern base of the ridge on which I stand, and runs onward till it meets the Zêdy in the distant plain. The stony valley of the Zêdy lies at my feet like a map, and my eye runs along it to where it enters the broad plain, in which are the remains of towns and villages almost innumerable. Away on the south is the swelling ground along the base of the mountains. The lofty battlements of Sŭlkhad shoot up over the intervening peaks, bearing S. 27° E. Eastward beyond the ravine is a green meadow or plain, with a large pond in its centre, and beyond it are swelling hill-tops clothed with forests of oak, among which appear

[1] This place was visited by Burckhardt, but he gives no description of it. See Travels in Syria, p. 89.

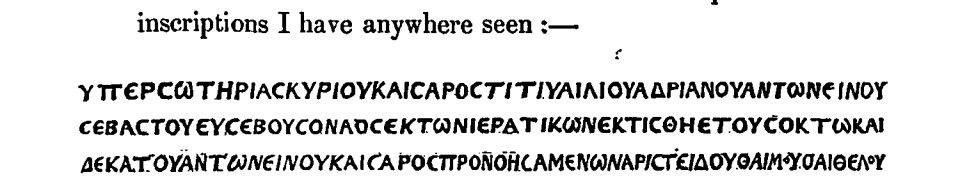
the grey towers of Sehwet el-Khudr, crowning an eminence about an hour distant. In the valley behind it, I was told, is a large town of the same name. This is the place visited by Burckhardt on his route from the eastern side of the mountains to Sŭlkhad.[2] In a straight line N. 18° E. runs a rugged wooded ridge to the foot of the Kuleib, which rises up beyond it a regular and graceful cone. Its eastern face is naked, and of a dusty red colour, as if covered with a thick stratum of ashes; on all the other sides it is clothed with oak forests. It did not appear to be much over an hour distant. On each side of this ridge is a deep wady, and on its western declivity, near the base of the Kuleib, stands the ruined town of Kufr. It is not visible from Hebrân, but its position was pointed out to me. Burckhardt went to it from this place, and gives a brief description of its ruins. He says, "It is built in the usual style of this country, entirely of stone; most of the houses are still perfect. The doors are uniformly of stone, and even the *gates of the town, between* 9 *and* 10 *feet high*, are of a *single piece of stone*." [3]

The town of Hebrân occupies the summit and sides of the extremity of the lofty ridge. The ruins of a few public buildings can still be traced, and many of the private houses are perfect and habitable, a few of them are now inhabited. On a projecting cliff, a little south of the town, stand the ruins of a once fine temple, which appears at a later age to have been converted into a church. A low stone door, evidently transported from some other building, gives admission to the interior. On the east was a portico, but it is now completely prostrate.

[2] Travels in Syria, pp. 95-6.

[3] Id. p. 90.

Within this building are two short inscriptions, copied by Burckhardt, on one of which is the word Αιεδηνων, and some have supposed this is the ancient name of the town. This however is very doubtful.[4] An old man, hearing us ask for inscriptions, led us to the top of this building, and there we found the following, in beautiful characters, on a large slab that had apparently been once over the main door. It is one of the finest and best-preserved inscriptions I have anywhere seen :—



This temple, therefore, was erected in the eighteenth year of the emperor Antoninus Pius, A.D. 155.[5]

[4] This inscription, which may be seen in Burckhardt, p. 90, has the words φυλλον Αιεδηνων, probably for φυλον or φυλη Αιεδηνων—"the company of Aidenos." This may be compared with the inscriptions at Suweideh, where the names of several "companies" are found. The name of the "company" may not necessarily be that of the town in which it flourished.

[5] Mr. Hogg gives a translation of this inscription as follows:—"For the safety of the Lord Cæsar *Titus Ælius Adrianus Antoninus* Augustus Pius this temple was founded out of the sacred funds in the eighteenth year of Antoninus Cæsar, Aristides Oaïmus, and Thelus Emmeplus Emmegane, Governor of Decon in the district called Thæmuab, (and) Emmegane Arus, the sacred quæstors, having præconsulted." I may here observe that I by no means agree with Mr. Hogg's rendering of the names, nor with his comments upon them. It is never a safe mode of criticism to take great liberties with the text, or to presume too much upon its inaccuracy, and more especially so when obscure names are concerned. This inscription was deeply and beautifully cut, well preserved, and in the best possible position for transcribing it. I copied it myself with considerable care, and feel pretty confident of its accuracy. Most of the inscriptions taken during this journey were copied by the Rev. Mr. Barnett, and many of them under very un-

It was with great difficulty we got away from the kind Druze inhabitants of this village, who had already sent to a neighbouring flock, and brought a kid to make a feast for us. I now regretted that we had sent our servants direct to Nejrân, for I observed that in this district a day might be spent to great advantage. Sehwet el-Khudr, Kufr, and the Kuleib, all lie within an easy ride. Burckhardt's map had led me astray in the calculation of distances and directions in this part of the mountains. There Sehwet el-Khudr is represented as some hours distant, at the eastern base of the mountains; while in reality it is in the very centre of the chain, and only about three miles from Hebrân. There was no use, however, in forming new plans or regretting old arrangements now; and so, when I had finished my observations, we continued our journey.

At 10·55 we left Hebrân, following a path that skirted the ruins on the western slope of the ridge. After passing these we turned down the steep declivity to the left, and in twelve minutes crossed a fine Roman road, which runs in a straight line to 'Afîneh and Busrah on the left, and extends up the hill on the right to the town of Kufr, and from thence, as my guide informed me, to extensive ruins called *Kantarah*. A few minutes afterwards we came to a large stream, whose source is at 'Ain Mûsa, near Kufr. At the spot where we crossed it, it was divided into two channels by a verdant mound covered with dwarf oak; each channel was about 20 feet wide, by 2 or 3 in depth.

favourable circumstances. Many of them were much defaced; some in positions where it required a painful effort to get near them; and all of them had to be transcribed amid distractions caused by inquisitive men and insolent boys.

We afterwards crossed a low rocky ridge, and entered another wady with a smaller stream. We rode along its banks in a north-western direction for about fifteen minutes; it then turns due west, and, running down between two lofty tells, enters the plain, and flows across it to the north of 'Ary. Our road led up the right bank, and at 11·40 we were beside the large village of Sehweh, situated on the summit and sides of a tell. The declivities of the mountain around this village, as well as the plain below, are celebrated for their great fertility. This is the place visited by Burckhardt on his first journey from Suweideh to 'Ary.[6]

We did not enter the village, but continued our route along the side of the mountains a short distance above it; and at 12·5, having crossed a deep ravine, we had a small ruined village on our left, probably the Khirbet Rishe of Burckhardt.[7] A short time after we passed Wady Thâly, in which is the track of a winter torrent containing a very small stream; this, with two or three other rivulets, forms in winter a considerable torrent, which flows in a shallow wady across the plain by Mujeidel, Kenâkir, and Uslâhah to Thâly, where it unites with the Wady Suweideh. The streams from Sehweh and 'Ain Mûsa afterwards fall into it, and, under the name of Wady ed-Dân, it extends westward to the ancient town of Derà, and finally joins the Sheriat el-Mandhûr. At 12·25 Mahmûd pointed out to me a fountain, about a quarter of an hour on the right, at the base of a wooded hill called 'Ain Kerâthy, of which he

[6] Travels in Syria, p. 87. [7] Id.

related a curious legend. He said that in ancient times a powerful king wished to build a city far away on the plain, and selected a place now called Mezarîb, but, there being no water there, he constructed an aqueduct underground from this fountain, and thus secured an abundant supply. The water still flows, and the lake at Mezarîb is supplied from 'Ain Kerâthy.

After crossing another ravine we reached the village of Raha at 12·30. We now turned to the left, and, after a fast ride of a quarter of an hour, saw the small village Musâd away on our right, at the foot of two lofty conical hills, whose sides are bleak and smooth, and of a dull red colour like the eastern slope of the Kuleib. In half an hour more we entered the ruins of Suweideh. We had still a long journey before us, and did not wish to spend our time in paying empty compliments to Sheikh Wâked. We sent our salâms with Nikôla while we rode on across the bridge and sat down beneath the shadow of the Doric monument above referred to. Mahmûd stopped to get his horse shod, and I had thus time to make some additional observations.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE SOUTHERN SECTION OF THE JEBEL HAURAN.

I had now finished my tour among the hills of Bathanyeh, or the Jebel Haurân, and was about to turn away from them, most probably for ever. I felt glad that I had been privileged to visit a country renowned in early history, and sacred as among the first provinces bestowed by God on his ancient people; but it was not without feel-

ings of regret that I turned away to other places ere I thoroughly explored the whole region. The freshness and beauty of the scenery, the extent and grandeur of many of the ruins, the hearty and repeated welcomes of the people, and above all the convincing testimony afforded at every step to the minute accuracy of the Holy Scriptures, filled my mind with such pleasurable feelings as I had never before experienced in travel. I had often read how God had delivered into the hands of the children of Manasseh Og king of Bashan and all his people; and I had observed the statement that a portion of his territory, even the region of Argob, contained *three score cities* fenced with high walls, gates, and bars, beside unwalled towns a great many.[8] I had sometimes turned to my atlas, where I found the *whole of Bashan* delineated, and not larger than an ordinary English county. I was surprised; and though my faith in the Divine Record was not shaken, yet I thought some strange statistical mystery hung over the passage. That one city, nurtured by the commerce of a mighty empire, might grow till her people could be numbered by millions I could well believe—that two or even three might spring up in favoured spots, clustered together, I could also believe. But that *sixty walled cities*, besides unwalled towns a great many, should be found at such a remote age, far from the sea, with no rivers and little commerce, appeared quite inexplicable. Inexplicable and mysterious though it appeared, it was strictly true. On the spot, with my own eyes, I had now verified it. Lists of *more than a hundred* ruined cities and villages in these mountains alone I had tested and found

[8] Deut. iii. 3-5.

correct, though not complete. More than thirty of these I had myself either visited or observed so as to fix their positions on the map. Of the high antiquity of these ruins scarcely a doubt can be entertained, and the extent of the more important among them has already been estimated. Here then we have a venerable record, more than three thousand years old, containing incidental statements and statistics which few would be inclined to receive on trust, and not a few to cast aside as glaring absurdities, and yet which *close examination shows to be minutely accurate.*

Ere we leave these hills I shall complete the general review of their topography commenced above.[9] From Tell Abu Tumeis, it has been stated, the mountain-chain preserves an almost uniform altitude to Tell Kuleib. From this latter point it slopes down gradually to Sŭlkhad. The whole of the loftier portion is clothed with oak forests, and the scenery is rich and varied. South of the Kuleib the chain branches, or rather is divided by a wady which extends from near the eastern base of that peak to the village of Muneidhirah west of Sŭlkhad. The eastern portion is, toward the south, destitute of trees; but is nearly all capable of cultivation in patches and terraces, where the loose stones are gathered off the soil. The inaccuracy in Burckhardt's map between Suweideh and 'Ary has already been pointed out.[1] Another of the very same character has been made in the delineation of his route down the mountain-range to Sŭlkhad, which I shall now point out, as by it the latter place has been moved six or seven miles too far south, and thus the whole southern group of cities, including Busrah, Kureiyeh, and

[9] See pp. 57, 65.

[1] See p. 136.

others, incorrectly laid down. The first thing that drew my attention to this matter was the position of 'Ayûn, and the great distance as represented on his map between Kureiyeh and Hebrân—about 2½ hours. We rode this in 1 h. 35 min., which, taking into account the nature of the road and circuitous route we followed, does not represent a distance of more than four miles. In examining, therefore, the relative bearings of Sŭlkhad, Kureiyeh, Sehwet el-Khudr, and Hebrân, I was at once convinced that there must be some mistake in the estimate which represents Sŭlkhad as 4¾ hours south of Sehwet, and I soon discovered how the mistake occurred.[2]

Burckhardt in going from Hebrân to Zaele (or rather *Sâleh*) passed over the whole breadth of the mountain-chain to the eastern plain; but in returning thence to Sehwet el-Khudr he recrossed only the eastern branch. The plain into which he descended from the latter town, and which he calls Ard Aaszaf (*Ard 'Asăf*) is the *wady* which divides the mountains, and neither the eastern nor the western plain.[3] Down this plain he then rode two hours to Ayoun (*'Ayûn*), having observed when half way the ruined castle of Koueires (*Kûweiris*) on a tell three or four miles on the right. 'Ayûn, he says, is built at the foot of a hill called Szfeikh (*Sefîkh*), and this hill must be a part of the *western* branch. Now I ascertained that 'Ayûn is only half an hour distant due north from Sŭlkhad, and this information accords exactly with Buckingham's route,[4]—whereas in Burckhardt the distance is represented as 2¾ hours.[5] In the map this distance has

[2] Travels in Syria, pp. 95-7.
[3] Id. p. 94.
[4] Buck., Trav. among Arab Tribes, p. 214.
[5] Trav. in Syr. pp. 97, 99.

not been properly laid down, probably because it was found not to accord with other calculations. Still the distance on the map is much too great, being nearly two hours. Here there is no *mistake* on Burckhardt's part, but there is a *want* of sufficient fulness. He ought to have given the *directions* as well as the *distances*. On arriving at 'Ayûn he turned nearly *due east*, and recrossed the eastern branch of the mountains, which is here low, and covered with ruined walls, as he describes it. Proceeding in this direction, he reached 'Orman in 1½ hour, and from thence he turned back W. by S., and arrived at Sŭlkhad in 1¼ hour more.[6] Instead of 4¾ hours, Sŭlkhad is only 2¼ hours from Sehwet el-Khudr. Burckhardt's route from Sŭlkhad to Kureiyeh appears to have been the same as ours. Buckingham's, however, was different, as he kept more to the north, and passed close to 'Ayûn.[7]

The town of 'Orman, visited by Burckhardt, I saw from the ruins of Sŭlkhad; it is in the plain, considerably to the eastward of the base of the mountain. It is a place of some historical importance, as marking the site of the ancient *Philippopolis*. It is identified by means of an inscription copied by Burckhardt, in which the name occurs, with the date 253, or A.D. 359. In Aurelius Victor's 'History of the Cæsars' is the following passage, which throws some light on these ruins:—"M. Julius Philippus, an Arab of Trachonitis, having united with himself his son Philippus (in the government of the empire), and having arranged affairs in the East, *and erected the city*

[6] Travels in Syria, p. 99.
[7] Travels among Arab Tribes, p. 214

of Philipopolis in Arabia, came to Rome."[8] This Philippus was a native of Bostra, and founded Philipopolis to perpetuate his own name, and to honour his native land. He may probably have descended from a family which at one time resided in this very town; and when he obtained the sceptre of the Cæsars, he rebuilt and adorned it, and gave it his own name. Philipopolis became afterwards an episcopal city, and its bishop signed the acts of the Council of Chalcedon.[9] The Greek name is now forgotten, and the ancient Syrian name alone is known to the people of the land.

[8] Chap. xxviii.; see also Ritter, Pal. und Syr., ii. 954.
[9] S. Paulo, Geog. Sac., p. 295; see also Reland, Pal., p. 218.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUWEIDEH TO NEJRAN, EDHR'A (EDREI), AND DAMASCUS.

Roman road — The plain of Bashan — The borders of the Lejah, *Trachonitis* — Situation of Nejrân, and description of its ruins — Kerâtah, the ancient *Coreathes* — Ride along the side of the Lejah — Busr el-Hariry — Fanaticism and insolence of its inhabitants — Danger of penetrating the Lejah — Approach to *Edrei* — Description of its position and ruins — Identification and history — Fearful conflict with its inhabitants — Rescue — Threats and plans of escape — Midnight flight — Bivouac in a defile — Wild scenery of the Lejah.

TOPOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE LEJAH. — Its extent and boundaries — Identified with *Trachonitis* and ARGOB — Great numbers of deserted towns — Ruins of Musmeih, the ancient *Phænos*.

The plain of Bashan — Arrival at Deir 'Aly — The valley of the *Pharpar* — The Hâj road.

WE now resume our narrative. At 1·55 we again mounted, and rode down the stony declivity to the plain. In ten minutes we crossed the Roman road referred to above. The loose stones and rough ground continued till we reached the village of Welgha at 2·50. Among the rocks there is abundance of the richest soil. Welgha is built on the top of a low tell, and resembles all the other villages of this region. Half an hour north from it, on another tell, is Rîmeh, and between them, in a stony wady, are two towers resembling the tombs of Kunawât. On passing Welgha the plain becomes open, and the loamy soil is entirely free from stones, affording fine fields for the cultivation of wheat. At 3·30 we reached the

small ruined village of Mezraâh, beside which there is a large fountain. We soon afterwards crossed one of the branches of the Wady Kunawât, and then rode over a rich plain to Sijn. On our way the large village of Mejdel was visible about a mile on our right. Here Burckhardt found several Greek inscriptions.[1] Some distance north of it is Kefr el-Laha, where there are also large ruins of ancient buildings, with inscriptions of the time of the emperor Gordianus II. The latter village stands on the bank of the northern branch of Wady Kunawât.[2] So many small wadys descend from these mountains, and so much do they resemble each other when they reach the plain, that it is difficult for the traveller to ascertain with accuracy the course of each one. So far as I have been able to ascertain by inquiries and observation, two wadys descend from the neighbourhood of Kunawât—one from the ravine beside the ruins, and the other from the ravine at Deir es-Sumeid. The latter sweeps to the north, after leaving the mountains, to Kefr el-Laha, where both Burckhardt and Buckingham saw it;[3] and from thence it follows the borders of the Lejah, a little southward of Nejrân, Busr el-Harîry, and Edhrâ, and, after leaving the latter place, winds across the plain to Eshmiskîn and Tell Asharch, from whence it runs southward to the Sheriat el-Mandhûr. The other branch runs in a parallel course over the plain, and falls into the former between Eshmiskîn and Tell Ash'areh.

Sijn stands upon a tell, and contains some buildings of great solidity. As we passed it the Druze sheikh and

[1] Travels in Syria, pp. 66, 67.
[2] Id. p. 68; see also Ritter, Pal. und Syr., ii. 873.
[3] Travels in Syria, p. 67; Buck., Trav. among Arab Tribes, p. 253.

several of his attendants saw us, and it was with much difficulty we were enabled to get away from them, so eager were they that we should remain for the night. The stony ground here again commenced; and the black porous trap cropped up in jagged masses from the surface of the plain, many of them twenty feet high, and forty or fifty yards in diameter. These, with the huge intervening boulders and scattered fragments, give the country a barren and savage aspect. As we advanced, the patches of clear soil became smaller and less frequent, and the rocks loftier and more extended. The town of Nejrân now appeared before us—the massive black walls and heavy square towers rising up lonely and deserted-like from the midst of a wilderness of rocks. The singular physical features I had remarked at Burâk here again showed themselves, and were evidences that we had crossed the borders of that geological wonder the Lejah. Some mounds of loose stones regularly formed on an open place to the left attracted my attention, and Mahmûd informed me that here were placed the batteries of Ibrahîm Pasha during his war with the Druzes. A large fortified camp had been constructed behind them.

We reached Nejrân at 5·15. The approach to the town is by a winding path among the rocks. We had often to scramble over smooth ledges of basalt, where our horses could scarcely keep their feet; and these were separated by deep fissures, and in some places encompassed by pools full of water. A stranger would have sought in vain for the path, if path it can be called. On entering the ruins we were led to a large open place in the centre of them, and here we found the venerable sheikh Kâsem abu-Fakher in the midst of his elders,

waiting to receive us. They all rose as we approached; and after the ordinary salutations the chief turned and led the way into his house, with all the grace and dignity of a hereditary prince. He is a man of some seventy years, but still hale and strong. His appearance is dignified, perhaps a little pompous, but his voice is gentle and his manners easy and affable. He was the only Druze sheikh I met in the Haurân who used tobacco. He and the four others whom I had already visited are the acknowledged leaders of the Druzes in this province.

Our first inquiries during the evening were as to the practicability of penetrating the Lejah from this place on the following day. The sheikh answered with considerable hesitation, though he assured us there was no danger so long as a Druze was with us. After some time he advised us to go to Edhrà direct, and then proceed from that place to Dâma, and thence to Khŭbab. This, he assured us, would take up less time than the route we had proposed, and would also enable us to see the Lejah to more advantage. Mahmûd also urged this new plan upon us now, though he had agreed to the other before our arrival. Sheikh Fâres 'Amer had strictly charged us not to enter the Lejah unless Sheikh Kâsem or some of his sons would go with us. When I proposed this to the sheikh he laughed, and said there would be no difficulty in entering from Edhrà. We resolved to adopt the new plan of route thus proposed, and before twenty-four hours had passed we were able to see the reason of Sheikh Kâsem's hesitation; and we were also able to see that if we had gone to Dâma, as we first proposed, there is a strong probability that we should never have been permitted to leave it.

February 9.—We spent this morning in examining the extensive ruins of Nejrân, and in making a survey of the environs from the top of the steeple of the old church. The notes I here made were afterwards taken from me, and it is only from memory I can give an account of this section of the Lejah. This town is built near its southern border. Around the ruins, and so far as I could see from the west round to the north, there are no fields or open spaces, but all is a vast wilderness of jagged rocks. Toward the north-east, in the direction of 'Ahîry, are some spots of soil which appear to be carefully cultivated. In the interior of the Lejah I observed numbers of trees among the rocks, principally consisting of the dôm or terebinth and wild olive.

Nejrân has still a large population of Druzes and Christians in about equal numbers, who occupy what remains of the ancient buildings. The ruins I estimated at nearly two miles in circumference. The most important building remaining is a large church, with two square towers; it appears to have been latterly used as a mosk. Upon the walls are several Greek inscriptions. On one of them is the date 458, A.D. 564, being the latest I have anywhere seen in the Haurân. The extent of these ruins, and the magnitude of the church in the midst of them, render it highly probable that this was at one time an episcopal city, but its ancient name is now lost.[4]

We mounted our horses at 8·30, and, bidding adieu to our aged host, took a path leading among the rocks, in a south-westerly direction, towards the village of Dûr. In

[4] An account of Nejrân may be seen in Buckingham's Travels among the Arab Tribes, pp. 263-65. Some of the inscriptions are given by him, very incorrect, as usual. See also Ritter, Pal. und Syr., ii. 865-67.

half an hour we entered the plain, and then turned westward, along the well-defined side of the Lejah. At 9·15 we reached a rocky tell covered with prostrate ruins, on the north side of which is a verdant meadow, with a large and fine fountain of pure water in the midst of it, called 'Ain Kirâtah. Seetzen here copied a Greek inscription from the door of a church. Gesenius suggests that this may be the site of *Coreathes*, an episcopal city, mentioned under the metropolis Bostra in the 'Notitia Ecclesiastica.' The name certainly suggests the identity; and the extent of the ruins, among which is a large church, favours the supposition.[5] Its situation beside a large perennial fountain would always make it a place of importance in this thirsty land. About half an hour south-west of this place is the village of Dûr, with many remains of former opulence and taste. From an inscription copied by Seetzen it appears that the ancient name was *Doroa*.[6]

Forty minutes after leaving 'Ain Kirâtah we crossed the dry bed of the Wady Kunawât, which makes a sharp turn to the north, and runs close to the side of the Lejah. A magnificent plain now opened up before us, perfectly flat, and entirely free from stones and rocks. A few minutes on our left was the ruined village Ta'ârah on a tell; and some distance on our right we saw the square towers of another large village rising up from among the rocks of the Lejah. I do not remember its name, but, from the position I think it was Duweirah. We continued our course in a straight line to Busr el-Harîry, which we reached in 1 h. 5 m. from 'Ain Kirâtah. It is situated

[5] Ritter, Pal. und Syr. ii. 866. The Κωμη Κωρεαθης is mentioned in S. Paulo, Geog. Sac. Not. Ant., p. 51, and in Reland, Pal., p. 218.

[6] Ritter, id., 868. In the inscription are the words Κωμης Δωρoα..ω..

on a tongue of rocks projecting from the Lejah. The entrance is by a very difficult winding path, first crossing the Wady Kunawât, and then ascending the confused heaps of rocks. As we crossed this rugged natural barrier, Mahmûd pointed out some lofty crags on the right, and said that on those fell two brothers and a nephew of his master Sheikh Fâres, in the first battle with Ibrahîm Pasha. On entering the village, which is wholly inhabited by Muslems, we were received with scowling looks and muttered curses. We took no notice of this ungracious and unexpected reception, but rode up to an open place beside a large tank, and there dismounted. Two of our horses required to be shod, and this was our only object in stopping here. We soon discovered that we had left behind us, in the Druze country, friendly greetings and generous hospitality, and that we had entered the region of fanatical Muslems, who only sought a favourable opportunity to cut our throats. The crowd who gathered round us rudely demanded our business, and, on requesting them to send for the blacksmith, not a man would move. Yûsef the muleteer went in search of one, and speedily returned with him. Mr. Barnett had in the mean time gone round among some of the half-ruined houses, and was proceeding to the upper and principal part of the village, when he was peremptorily ordered back, and we were all told to remain where we were. Mahmûd could ill brook such commands from men he despised; but prudence whispered caution, and he told me we had better mount our horses, keep together, and proceed as soon as our business was done. One of our number rode out a few yards, but was met by a shower of stones from women

and boys. The mob now numbered fifty or sixty, and they began to press closely upon us, and to ask, or rather demand, to see our arms. Mahmûd was evidently uneasy; and I also observed that a respectably dressed old man, apparently from Damascus, was endeavouring to keep the younger men away from us. So closely did the people press upon us, that we were compelled to keep our horses in motion in order to have a little open space in case of an attack. The village shaikh in his scarlet robe came up at this time and invited us to take coffee, but in such a tone that we at once declined. He asked our object in coming here, and Mahmûd briefly answered him. After conversing a few minutes he walked away, without making any effort to check the insolence of the mob.

Our horses being shod, we rode off amid a perfect shower of curses. As we were winding among the lofty rocks on our way out, we met several horsemen, who rudely demanded where we were going. Mahmûd rode on and did not deign to reply. They drew up as we passed, and I heard one of them say "Let them go." After we had cleared the rocks and entered the plain another larger party of horsemen demanded where we had been; but as our guide did not deign to reply to such haughty questions even when amid the defiles, he treated them with manifest contempt now when in the open plain. He was in fact in a towering passion, and turning round he cursed the whole village and its inhabitants for many generations back.

The difficulty of penetrating to the centre of the Lejah now began to be evident to us all. Dâma I knew was

filled with Muslems, who had been driven by the soldiers from their villages in the western plain, and who were still vowing vengeance against the power that had stripped them of their property and had forced them to desert their homes. Their fierce fanatical spirit, not disposed even in peaceful times to tolerate the presence of infidels, would now delight in avenging their wrongs on such unhappy stragglers as might fall in their way. Under present circumstances, and in such a place as Dâma, they would not be restrained by any feelings of fear as to the consequences; and even should they hesitate to make an open attack, unseen hands could deal deadly blows from behind inaccessible rocks. When I questioned Mahmûd, therefore, about the practicability of going to Dâma, he only replied, "If they give us such a reception in Busr beside the plain, what may we expect in Dâma in the very centre of the rocks?" I then remarked that, if the people of Edhr'a were like those of Busr, we had better continue our course to the Christian village of Khŭbab. He said there were Christians in Edhrà, and that among them there was no danger. I only wish his words had proved true.

Our course now lay along a fine plain extending westward and southward far as the eye could see, with only the dark masses of ruins, and an occasional conical mound, to break the uniformity. On our right the border of the Lejah, sweeping round in a circle, formed a kind of bay, and its side was as clearly defined as a rocky shore-line. Small square towers occur at intervals along its rugged border, and traces of massive walls are here and there visible. The lofty buildings of Edhr'a appeared in front,

extending along the summit of a projecting tongue of rocks, and also running some distance toward the interior. Crossing the wady Kunawât on the eastern side of this promontory, and ascending the ridge by a winding rugged path, on which it was with difficulty our careful horses kept their feet, we surmounted the exterior barrier and had before us a little level spot, comparatively free from stones and rocks. Beyond this on a rising ground stand the ruins of Edhr'a, stretching away far to the right. We entered the south-eastern part of the city, and dismounted in the court of the Christian sheikh.

The projecting tongue of the Lejah, on which Edhr'a stands, is about a mile and a half wide at the broadest part, and is nearly two miles long. On its extremity is a small ruined village. The situation is a strange one for a city of such magnitude—without water, without access except over rocks and through defiles that are all but impracticable. All other advantages, however, seem to have been sacrificed to security and strength. An extensive view is obtained from the roofs of the houses, over the great plain to the south and the wilderness of rocks northward. Shortly after our arrival we ascended to the terrace of the sheikh's residence to enjoy the view and obtain some general idea of the extent and character of the ruins.[7]

[7] From this spot I took a series of very important bearings, calculated to connect the Jebel Haurân, and my line of route along their eastern base, with this S.W. corner of the Lejah and the Haj road. Tell Khaledîyeh, Tell Sheihân, Shŭhba, Suweideh, and the Kuleib, were all visible, and their relative bearings accurately noted. The positions of several towns to the westward were also pointed out to me, such as Eshmiskîn, Mezarîb, and Nâwa. These bearings, when connected with the numerous others I had taken, and with my itineraries, were highly important in the construction of a map; but they were

The appearance of the city from this spot was far from inviting; the huge masses of shattered masonry could scarcely be distinguished from the savage rocks by which they are everywhere encompassed; and the whole is black, as if scathed by lightning. A few square towers rise up at intervals from the heaps of ruins, and some buildings of a better class still exist. The private houses that remain are low, massive, and gloomy, and many of them are encumbered by the fallen ruins of Roman structures. They are similar in every respect to those found in the ancient cities among the mountains. On a few of these private dwellings I observed short Greek inscriptions, which prove that they are, *at least*, as old as the Roman age. The ruins of the ancient city cover an irregular oblong ridge about a mile in length by two-thirds of a mile in breadth. The present inhabitants reside in the ancient dwellings, selecting the apartments best fitted for comfort and security.

There are some circumstances which render the certain identification of this ancient site a matter of considerable difficulty; but I am inclined, after a careful consideration of the whole arguments, to regard this city as the modern representative of the ancient EDREI. The reasons that have led me to form this conclusion are chiefly its position, the manifestly remote antiquity of some of its private dwellings, and its subsequent history. It is probably well known to many of my readers that almost all geographers maintain that the modern *Der'a*, a ruined town nearly

unfortunately all lost. I have, since that time, been able in some degree to make up for this misfortune; and the map of Fezy Beg, which as usual I compared *on the spot* with my observations, was much more accurate here than farther to the east.

ten miles southward, is identical with Edrei; and they advance strong arguments in favour of their opinion. Either name agrees equally well with the Hebrew Edrei;[8] and no argument can of course be drawn from the analogy of the names in favour of one more than the other.

The *situation* of Edhr'a is such as would naturally be selected for the site of a city in early and troublous times, and by the rulers of a warlike nation. The principles of fortification were then but little known, and the towns and villages were consequently placed in positions strong by nature—such as on the summits of hills and steep cliffs, and in the midst of rocky fastnesses. The advantageous position of Edhr'a in this latter respect has already been alluded to: and besides, while it thus occupied an almost impregnable site, it lay in the midst of a plain of unrivalled richness. These considerations weigh strongly in my mind in favour of the supposition that this city is identical with the ancient Edrei. Der'a, on the other hand, lies in the open plain on the banks of a little wady, and has no natural advantages; so that I cannot believe such a site would have been selected for a royal city by the warlike Rephaims. Its buildings, besides, have not those evidences of remote antiquity which appear in the houses of Edhr'a. Yet Eusebius, under the word *Astaroth*, says that *Adraa* is six miles distant from it, and *twenty-five* miles from *Bostra*;[9] and in the Peutinger

[8] Dr. Smith writes the name of the one city ادرع, and the name of the other ذرعا; but I believe the radical letters are identical in them both; and the latter ought to be ذرعا. These correspond with the radical letters in the Hebrew name אדרעי. See Bib. Res., vol. iii. App. p. 152, note 1, and p. 155, note 5.

[9] Onomasticon, s. v. *Astaroth*, p. 28.

Tables the distance between Bostra and *Adraha* is given at twenty-four Roman miles.[1] Now, there can be no doubt that the city here mentioned by Eusebius and in the Peutinger Tables is the modern *Der'a*, whose distance from Busrah, as laid down upon my map, will be found exactly to correspond to the statements of these authorities, and there are still traces of a fine Roman road running between them. Edhr'a is upwards of thirty Roman miles from Busrah. It cannot be questioned, however, that both these cities existed in the days of Eusebius,[2] that both of them were large and opulent, and that their names were very nearly the same; it is not remarkable, therefore, if they should have been confounded. I do not by any means consider the statement of Eusebius as of equal weight with the evidence derived from the nature of the position and the character of the ruins. Der'a was probably better known to him as lying on a great line of road leading to the metropolis of this province, and he may thus have hastily identified it with the Edrei of Scripture.

It was on the plain near this city that the great decisive battle was fought between the Israelites and the armies of Og king of Bashan, in which the latter was slain.[3] Edrei fell into the hands of the conquerors, and was given by Moses, with the whole kingdom of Bashan, to the half-tribe of Manasseh.[4] It probably did not remain long in

[1] Reland, Pal., p. 421.

[2] The inscriptions found upon the ruins prove this; but it is evident that Edhr'a must have been much larger and more opulent than Der'a. Dr. Smith, who visited both places, says that the ruins of the latter will not compare at all with those of the former (see Bib. Res., vol. iii. App. p. 152).

[3] Num. xxi. 33; Deut. iii. 1-4. [4] Josh. xiii. 31.

their possession, for the name does not again occur in the Scriptures. May it not be that, in consequence of its position on the borders of a wild region infested by numerous robber bands, it was soon abandoned by the Israelites?[5] The monuments now found in it show that it must have been a place of considerable importance from the time the Romans took possession of Bashan. Richter copied a fragment of a Greek inscription, from which we learn that it bore the rank of a *Metrocomia* in the time of the Emperor Alexander Severus (A.D. 222-235), and was called *Zoroa*.[6] Above the western doorway of the church of St. George is a Greek inscription, to the effect that the building was formerly a heathen temple, but was converted into a church in the year 410, A.D. 516.[7] There are many other Greek inscriptions given in Burckhardt, and I saw still more in the city, but they are of no historical value. Some of them are upon the graves of Roman soldiers. *Adra* was one of the most important episcopal cities in the province of Arabia; and its bishops were present at the general councils of Seleucia (A.D. 359), Constantinople (381), and Chalcedon (451).[8] It is worthy

[5] In Josephus' Antiquities we find many references to the predatory and bloodthirsty habits of the inhabitants of Trachonitis. See xvi. 9, 1, &c. The remnant of the ancient inhabitants of Bashan probably took refuge amid the inaccessible defiles of this wild region when the neighbouring plain fell into the hands of the Israelites.

[6] Ritter, Pal. und Syr., ii. 860; Buckingham, Travels among Arab Tribes, p. 274.

[7] Burckhardt, Travels in Syria, p. 61. Colonel Leake has given this date as if the *Christian era* had been then used; but it does not appear that the Christians in this country ever used that era previous to the time of the Mohammedan conquest of Syria. There is clear evidence from many other inscriptions that the Bostrian era *only* was in use throughout this whole province from the middle of the second century.

[8] Reland, Pal., pp. 548-9.

of remark that the name is generally written in the plural, Ἀδρααὶ and Ἀδρααν.[9] In A.D. 1142 the crusaders under Baldwin III. attempted to take the city, but they encountered such obstacles in the difficult nature of the ground, the scarcity of water, and the fierce valour of the people, that they were unsuccessful. The historian of the crusades, in his account of this attack, refers to the large subterranean cisterns that abound in the neighbourhood of the city among the rocks; and there is scarcely anything that now strikes the traveller more than the number and extent of these reservoirs, not only in this but in all the other cities and villages of the Lejah and mountains.[1] William of Tyre gives another account of a plundering expedition of the crusaders into the ancient kingdom of Bashan, which was more successful. Taking advantage of the temporary absence of the great Saladin, they crossed the Jordan and entered Trachonitis; they succeeded in capturing a city called *Zora*, but the inhabitants had suddenly removed from it all their property and cattle to "strongholds" (*loca munitiora*), so that their success was fruitless.[2] These strongholds were the rocky

[9] Id., and S. Paulo, Geog. Sac., p. 295, note 8.

[1] Wil. Tyr. Hist. in Gesta Dei per Francos, pp. 895-6. "Transcursa igitur cum summo periculo regionis illius parte, circa horam dei novissimam ad locum perveniunt, qui *antiquo Adratum dicitur* vocabulo, nunc autem vulgari appellatione dicitur *Civitas Bernardi de Stampis*. Est autem una de urbibus suffraganeis, quæ ad Bostrensem metropolim habet respectum .... ubi etiam de cisternis, quarum ora videbant patentia, et sine difficultate haurire aquas se posse nostri arbitrantur, demissas situlas non sine damno admittebant." See also Wilken, Gesch. der Kreutz, iii. 1, pp. 215-16.

[2] Wil. Tyr., *ut sup.*, p. 1031. The words are here so important that I give an extract from the original:—Pertranseuntes ergo *Traconitidem* regionem, quæ *Bostrensis* diocesios pars est non modica, Syriem mi-

defiles and cavern-like recesses of the Lejah, to which the whole population of Edhr'a could fly in a few hours, carrying with them every article of value. The Arabic word إذرع is pronounced either *Edhr'a* or *Ezr'a;* and hence probably the diversity of spelling in William of Tyre's history. Abulfeda mentions this city, and says it is one of the capitals of the Haurân, and is eighteen miles distant from Sunamein. These statements are of great importance; *in the first place*, as tending to fix the precise position of the city he alludes to (Sunamein is a well-known ruined town on the Haj road; and it will be observed from my map that it is exactly eighteen Roman miles distant from Edhr'a, while Der'a is nearly twelve farther south); and, in *the second place*, this statement affords strong evidence that this Edhr'aât is identical with the Greek Adraa, *both being written in the plural.*[3] Upon these grounds, therefore, I am led to believe that EDREI, the capital of Bashan; *Adraa*, the episcopal city; the *Edhr'aât* of Abulfeda, and the modern Edhr'a, are identical; and further, that the modern Der'a is the site of the *Adraa* of Eusebius, and the *Adraha* of the Peutinger Tables.

After a hasty repast we set out, in company of the

norem, cujus caput est Damascus, ingressi, et ad Orientalem ejus plagum contendentes, *locum celebrem et famosum Zora nomine*, multis refertum habitatoribus, qui a Damascena non multum distat urbe, violenter effregerunt: et inde regionem perlustrantes ex parte plurima, loca suburbana quæ vulgo Casalia dicuntur, suppositis ignibus et aliis, quibus poterant, nocendi artibus dejecerunt. Regionis autem habitatores, præcognito nostrorum adventu, cum gregibus et armentis, cum liberis et uxoribus *ad loca se contulerant munitiora.*

[3] Abulfeda, Tab. Syr., p. 97.

Christian ṣheikh, to examine the ruins. I was anxious to see something of the general features of a city so celebrated both on account of its remote antiquity and importance. We visited first a church dedicated to St. Elias, but long since in ruins. There is a descent of some 12 feet to the court, so high have the ruins been piled up on each side. Proceeding northward from this over vast mounds of rubbish, we reached a lofty square tower, with two or three Greek inscriptions on and beside it. Here is a spacious quadrangle, encompassed with arcades, and having the centre almost filled up with heaps of ruins composed of hewn stones and fragments of columns. Around it are the remains of large private dwellings. There are in this place the evidences of different periods and orders of architecture. It appears to have been first designed by the Romans, after their usual style of taste and splendour, but, being afterwards in part ruined, it was repaired during the early centuries of Saracenic rule. From hence we continued our walk to the large church of St. George, situated on the rising ground at the northern extremity of the city. It is a square pile of building, having in front a paved court-yard, raised about 12 feet above the ground, and surrounded by a wall. The entrance is by a very low stone door, evidently taken from some more ancient structure; over it, on a tablet, is the long Greek inscription above alluded to. The interior resembles the church of the monk Boheira at Busrah.

While we stood examining the exterior of this building and trying to decipher the inscription, we noticed that a crowd of some sixty or seventy people had collected

round us in the court. We paid little attention to this, however, as we had got accustomed to such evidences of popularity; and so intent were Mr. Barnett and myself on our antiquarian work, that we did not hear the remarks passed or the threats uttered by them. Nikôla heard these, and felt alarmed; but, just as he was about to inform us of them, we turned and went into the interior, while Mr. ——, Nikôla, and the sheikh remained without; Mahmûd and our servants were in the house where we had left our luggage and arms. Shortly after we had entered Mr. Barnett was some yards in front of me, writing, and I stood, with my arms folded and my back against a column, looking at the building. Ten or twelve men had followed us into the building. While I was thus standing I received a heavy blow on the shoulder from a large stick or club. I turned round suddenly, for I was completely taken by surprise, as not a word had been spoken, or a question asked, or a sound heard. The club was again raised, and I got another stroke on the arm which had been aimed at my head, but by starting back I escaped it. Several men, armed with their clubs, now attempted to close upon me, but I leaped back, and demanded what they wanted; at the same time, throwing open my large over-coat, I drew a pistol, which I had fortunately put in my belt at Busr el-Harîry. These things quickly attracted Mr. Barnett's attention, and he saw at a glance the danger of our position, and also drew a small pistol from his pocket. The cowardly ruffians had watched their opportunity, and, as soon as they saw our little party divided, they rushed upon us. They had no doubt thought we were altogether unarmed, and, having

two of us inside the church and two outside it, they felt that it would be easy to accomplish their purposes. The moment, however, they saw our pistols they rushed out of the door; but we, knowing the great number without, felt that our position was very critical. We, consequently, followed them, but the moment we appeared we received a volley of stones. In the crowd I could not see our companions or the sheikh, and I supposed they had either escaped or had been driven off. There was no possibility of my making my way to the door of the court, and to remain where I was would have been almost certain death; so, dashing forward, and pushing those before me to each side, I leaped over the wall in front to the hollow ground below. Just as I reached the ground a large stone struck me on the back, and stunned me. Exerting all my strength, I ascended a little mound of rubbish, and turned upon my assailants, who were now attempting to descend the wall. I again drew the pistol, and threatened to shoot the first who would descend. This checked them for a moment, and I then attempted to reason with them, inquiring what we had done that they should thus beat and abuse us like dogs. The only reply was a savage yell, "Kill him! kill him!" A perfect shower of stones followed this, and one of them striking me on the hand carried away the whole flesh of the sides of two of my fingers. I now observed Mr. —— and Nikôla, in the midst of the crowd, going out of the little gateway, and Mr. Barnett, I saw, had got round to near where I stood. The whole fury of the attack seemed directed against me, and, while I was meditating what to do, I was struck with a stone on the back of the neck, but

the thick collar of my coat in part deadened the blow. Fifteen or twenty men came close to the little mound I occupied; all were afraid, however, to close upon me, though the stones came thick and fast. I saw that my only chance was in flight, for, even should I fire, it would not save my own life; and if I should kill or wound any of my assailants, I well knew that not One of our party would leave the village alive. I turned, and ran across a field, as I thought, in the direction of the house where Mahmûd and the servants were. In my way I met a respectably dressed man, whom I took for the sheikh of the village, and I entreated him to keep back the mob, or they would murder me. He made no reply, and I continued my course. I now saw an opening in the range of houses before me, and entered it, but, to my horror, found it shut up by a lofty wall a few yards in front. I wheeled round on the moment, and ran to the summit of a mound of rubbish; here, however, some twenty or thirty men were close upon me, and flight seemed no longer possible. Before I had time to consider what I should do, the stroke of a stone on the back and another on the head brought me to the ground. Those that were before afraid to approach now rushed on me *en masse*. Though greatly stunned and exhausted, I was perfectly conscious, and saw one fellow deliberately aiming a blow at my head with his club. I received it on my left arm, and leaped to my feet. A vigorous effort drove a few of my assailants to some distance, and again I seized my pistol, and the crowd began to retreat, but at that moment a man from behind threw his arms round my body, and entreated me not to attempt to fire. I cast him off, after a hard

struggle, but he still grasped the pistol, and prayed me not to use it, or we should all be murdered. Looking at him, I recognised the respectably dressed man I had met a few minutes previously. "What am I to do then?" I demanded. "Give me the pistol, and I will save you." He looked honest, and I thought my life would be sacrificed at any rate; so, with a quick motion of my finger, I struck off the caps and gave up the pistol. This precaution I took lest it should be used against myself. Having got it, he told me to run. "Where?" I asked. He pointed out the path, and away I ran, while he restrained the mob behind. I soon overtook Mr. —— and Nikôla, who were likewise running, and the old sheikh trying to restrain their pursuers. I inquired for Mr. Barnett, but at that moment he too came up without hat or shoes, and the blood flowing from his head. We now ran along, guided by some men, and soon reached our house.

Our appearance wounded and bleeding surprised Mahmûd and our servants, and they quickly gathered up the arms and prepared for defence. Mahmûd rushing out confronted the angry mob, who were coming, as they said, to murder us all. He succeeded in turning them back; but as they went away they were heard to say we could not leave the village without their knowledge, and that as soon as we attempted to leave they would finish their work.

We had now leisure to examine our wounds and consider our position. My bruises were comparatively slight —I was much stunned, but not deeply cut. Mr. —— had received a severe cut in the arm; but Mr. Barnett's injuries were by far the most serious of all. He had got

several blows on the head and face, and was so much exhausted as to be unable to stand; and we had great doubts of his being able to sit on horseback, even should we manage to get away. I discovered that a small leather case, in which I had carried my note-books, letters, and the coins and medals I had collected, had been lost in the struggle.

As the evening advanced some of the more aged men of the village came to us, and attempted to excuse themselves by saying that the whole assault had been the work of a few boys. There was no use in disputing this point, or irritating them still more by stating our opinion. Mahmûd, however, was not sparing of his reproaches, and he threatened them with the vengeance of the great Druze chiefs, under whose guardianship we travelled. I requested him to let the matter rest, and said to them, if they would restore the missing articles, we would perhaps overlook the assault. A few minutes afterwards a man came in and brought with him my hat and one of my note-books—fortunately that one which contained the whole of observations up to the time of our arrival in Nejrân.

We now held several councils with Mahmûd and the Christian sheikh, and it was agreed that we should endeavour to escape at midnight, but that our intention should be kept secret from the Muslems. Both our guide and the sheikh considered that, if an attempt were made to go in daylight, a crowd would collect, and one would excite another until, probably, lives would be sacrificed. Had the village been in the plain, we would not have feared them; but in the midst of these savage rocks and

winding defiles horses are worse than useless. Several of the Muslems remained till after ten o'clock, apparently watching all our movements. We then ordered the servants to spread out our beds, and we all lay down, telling the guide and muleteer to do the same. When all was thus quiet our visitors went away, and the door of the court-yard was barred.

We were all soon on our feet again. Coffee was prepared, and after taking a little of it Mr. Barnett felt much better and ready for the road. Every preparation was made in silence—the beds were packed, the horses saddled, the loads fitted on, and all got ready. A knock was just then heard at the gate. Every light was withdrawn from the court in a moment, and we feared a return of our unwelcome visitors; but it was only the old sheikh and a monk who had been out as pickets to examine the road, and see if all was clear and quiet. The sheikh's two sons, who were to be our guides, now came forward with their guns slung on their shoulders. We all mounted in the court-yard and sallied forth. The sheikh with a little oil-lamp guided us along a narrow tortuous lane, shut in on both sides by lofty walls. The servants went first, Mr. Barnett followed them, and then the others, with Mahmûd in the rear. In passing a sharp corner Mr. Barnett's horse turned fiercely upon mine, and both animals neighed loudly. The sheikh made a quick gesture for silence. It was an anxious moment for us all, as we thought we could now hear commotion in the houses around. We rode quickly and noiselessly over a large mound of earth, and were soon clear of the ruins. Here we breathed more freely as

the old sheikh whispered his salâm. We followed our two guides in darkness and silence. They led us a little eastward from the ruins, and then turned to the north, and continued their course parallel to the city. I could not understand this movemant, and, fearing some treachery, I told Mahmûd to ride in front, while I rode close behind him, watching the motions of the two men as closely as the darkness would permit. Our path became more and more rugged. We could not see it, for both soil and stones were black; but we had sufficient evidence of it in the painful efforts of our careful animals as they scrambled over the smooth rocks and through the rugged fissures. I observed that we were again approaching the ruins, and, as near as I could judge, the very spot where the first attack had been made upon us. I feared the worst, but it was useless to speak. We could not advance a step without guidance. Just as we had reached the northern end of the ruins, now apparently only about a hundred yards distant, we heard a furious barking of dogs among the rocks close on our right. The thought at once occurred to all that we were betrayed, and that in such a place escape was impossible. Not a word was uttered however, and the guides went on. We descended into a deep ravine, through which even our horses seemed to feel their way more cautiously. Passing this, the dogs were left behind; but as we surmounted the opposite bank, another attack was made on us by these watchful animals. We struck westward, as I could see by the stars, and the object of our guides in bringing us this route began to be intelligible. A few minutes farther, and we entered what seemed to be the

line of an ancient road, with large rocks piled up on each side, and the interval partially filled with water. After proceeding another quarter of an hour along this, Mahmûd requested me to give the guides a present, and as he spoke the words my horse scrambled over something like a ruinous wall, and his feet then descended firmly on the level plain. Never, I believe, did I give an order for the payment of a *bakhshîsh* with so much real pleasure.

We had not proceeded far when we heard a furious barking of dogs, and the sound of commotion in the town. We supposed they had heard of our escape, and were preparing for pursuit; but the broad plain was before us, our hearts were light, and we cared not for all the murderous bands of the Lejah. Our course was north-by-west, along a fine road. We saw the dark outline of the village of Shŭkrah, on the borders of the rocks, some distance on the right. We soon after turned due north, and then a little eastward, guiding our course by the stars. The road, which had gradually become indistinct and ill-defined, was no longer visible; and we were some time wandering about ere we discovered it. Mahmûd had in the mean time struck a light, and we were all so intently engaged in our search after the lost road, that it was a considerable time ere we observed that we had turned directly back, and were proceeding again to Edhr'a. This we all saw from the stars; but Mahmûd would scarcely believe us, and to convince him we examined a compass. Turning again northward, we wandered on, Mahmûd carrying a light in his hand, and carefully examining the path along which we travelled. We soon struck a path

leading more to the eastward, and, following this, ere long got entangled among the rocks and ravines. Here we resolved to halt till daylight; and selecting a small amphitheatre, almost completely encompassed by perpendicular rocks, we dismounted.

After remaining about an hour, Mahmûd mounted and rode off alone in search of the path. He came back in half an hour, and requested us all to follow him. We did so, and in about fifteen minutes we rode past the small, half-ruined village of Mujeidel. It is situated, as I afterwards learned, on the edge of the Lejah, at a place where the rocks shoot out into the plain. North-west of this place, and likewise on the border of the Lejah, is Muhajjeh, referred to by Burckhardt.[4] Passing Mujeidel, we continued our course for an hour, every moment getting more and more entangled in the maze of rocks and mounds. We all suffered from cold and want of sleep; and our wounds and bruises gave us intense pain. Some uneasiness was felt also lest we should penetrate too far into this inhospitable region, and fall among the wild and lawless Arabs that dwell amid its fastnesses. Mahmûd at last called a halt, and expressed his determination to wait for daylight. The black rocks rose up round us in heavy broken masses, appearing still more gloomy and rugged from the darkness of the night. The incessant barking of the wild dogs, too, and the mournful cry of the jackal, mingled with the fierce howl of the hyæna, were heard on every side—at one time in the far distance, and at another so close to us as to make our horses start and tremble.

Daylight at last came—not with the slow, stealing step

[4] Travels in Syria, p. 109.

of the west, but with all the swiftness and beauty of eastern climes. The mountains of the Haurân stood out dark and gloomy from the bright red background; while the snowy summit of Hermon was already tinged with golden hues. The wild features of the scenery around us soon revealed themselves; heaps of huge black stones, like piled-up ruins, and mounds of naked rock shattered and torn into a thousand forms, with deep fissures running between them, and here and there little patches of stony ground intervening. We were able to see but a short distance; and there was no path or landmark to direct us. This western side of the Lejah is somewhat different in its character from the eastern and southern sections. It is covered with little tells of basalt, in some cases isolated, but in others continuous, like miniature mountain-ranges. Between these are occasional deep ravines, and some comparatively open spots from which the loose stones and boulders have been taken away, and the black soil left in a fit state for cultivation. But these fields are mere patches a few yards square. This renders the roads not only very difficult, but so intricate that, without an expert guide, it is impossible to go from one village to another.

Feb. 10*th.*—Mahmûd went, as soon as there was sufficient light, to the top of one of the highest mounds, and I followed him. Several villages were in view, with their dark towers and walls. A joyful cry from Yûsef the muleteer, from the top of a still loftier tell far in advance, was now heard; and descending from this place, we went toward him, and soon found that our little cavalcade was again in the right road, and the village of Khŭbab not far

distant. On gaining the elevated spot where Yûsef stood I obtained a commanding view over nearly the whole Lejah; and such a picture of wild desolation never before had I gazed on. The whole plain, far as the eye could see, I could only compare to the ruins of some Cyclopean city, deserted and prostrate, whose scathed and shapeless fragments completely cover the ground. There was not one pleasing feature for the eye to rest on. The very trees that grew up among the rocks in the distance had no fresh look about them; and as they are thinly scattered, they give a more haggard appearance to the scene. Strange as it may seem, however, this ungainly and forbidding region is thickly studded with deserted cities and villages, in all of which the dwellings are solidly built, and manifestly of remote antiquity; and in not a few are stately monuments of a later and more polished age. Sûr, and Jĕdal, and Hamîr were pointed out to me on the right, and Dâma was full in view in the very centre of the wilderness of rocks. Many others were visible in the same direction, whose names I did not learn. Before us, half an hour distant, stood Khŭbab, built on the summits of two rocky tells, and beyond it was a long line of towns and villages, standing just within the borders of the rocky stronghold. Setting out at a quick pace, we reached Khŭbab at 7½ o'clock.

Here we stopped to feed our horses and obtain some refreshment. The whole distance from Edhr'a to this place is about eleven geographical miles, or nearly four hours' smart riding, as the road winds considerably, and the latter half of it is very stony. Burckhardt travelled it in 4¼ hours. His route was more to the west than

ours.[5] We entered the Lejah at Mujeidel, but he kept out as far as Muhajjeh. Khŭbab is a large village inhabited solely by Christians; the sheikh, however, is a Druze. The houses are all ancient, and resemble those I had already seen at Burâț and other places. There is an easy access to the village from the plain.

At 8·45 we again mounted and set out for Deir 'Aly, intending, if possible, to go on to Damascus without stopping. Immediately on leaving the ruins, we entered the fine fertile plain which extends along the whole northern side of the Lejah. On the north, nearly three hours distant, is the low, black, and featureless ridge called Jebel Khiyârah; and away beyond it, on the east, the spurs from Mânia rŭn out toward the desert. Our road lay along the border of the plain, within a few hundred yards of the Lejah, the side of which resembles a Cyclopean wall in ruins. The most direct and more common road to Damascus from Khŭbab is N. by W. to Ghubâghib, and thence along the Haj route, but we selected that by Deir 'Aly as safer for our guide, who dreaded the Kurdish irregulars. We passed in succession the deserted villages of Melĭhah, Eib, and Kureim, all situated within the border of the Lejah. From the last-mentioned village the border begins to turn more eastward, and is greatly indented, until it reaches Shâârah, a considerable town standing on a promontory. From this place it turns due east and runs in a winding course to *Musmeih*, four Roman miles, and to Burâk about four more.

Both Shâârah and Musmeih were distinctly visible

[5] Travels in Syria, p. 109.

from our road, and we all regretted that time and circumstances did not now permit us to visit them, especially the latter. This, however, is not of so much importance, as they were both carefully examined by that enterprising and exact traveller Burckhardt.[6]

TOPOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE LEJAH.

I was now about to turn my back upon the Lejah, which I had during my tour well-nigh encompassed. This may, therefore, be a fitting place for summing up the results of my observations upon the topography and physical geography of this remarkable district.

The Lejah is of an irregular oval shape, about twenty-two miles long by fourteen wide. Its eastern side is nearly like the arc of a bow, having the ruins of Burâk on its northern extremity, and those of Bureiky near the southern. The distance between the two is about twenty-one miles, or seven hours' fast travel. Along the greater part of this extends the Wady Liwa. The southern border of the Lejah is a waving line running from Bureiky nearly due west, five miles, to Nejrân, and thence sweeping round to the north-west nine miles to Edhrà. On the western side, between the latter place and the village of Tibny, there are some deep indentations and bold projections; but the general direction is north-by-east, and the distance somewhat over nine miles. From Tibny the border proceeds about north-east to Shàârah, eight miles, and there turning east in six miles more it reaches Burâk.

[6] Travels in Syria, pp. 114-18.

The whole circumference is thus about fifty-eight geographical miles. Its border is almost everywhere as clearly defined as the line of a rocky coast, which indeed it very much resembles, with its inlets, bays, and promontories. At the south-eastern corner, between Tell Sheihân and Nejrân, the stony ground extends out from it to the base of the mountains, and the border is not, consequently, so apparent; there is this distinction however between the one and the other, that, while the plain is only stony, the Lejah has, in addition to the stones, a stratum of rock covering nearly the whole surface. The general surface is elevated from twenty to thirty feet above the surrounding plain. At a little distance it appears as flat as a sea; the only hills in it are Amâra (beside 'Ahiry) and Sumeid, already alluded to. The former is the loftiest, and has an elevation of about three hundred feet.

The physical features of the Lejah present the most singular phenomena I have ever witnessed, and to which there is not, so far as I know, a parallel in the world, with the exception of the Săfă. It is wholly composed of black basalt rock, which appears to have in past ages issued from innumerable pores in the earth in a liquid state, and to have flowed out on every side until the plain was almost covered. Before cooling, its surface was agitated by some fearful tempest or other such agency; and it was aftewards shattered and rent by internal convulsions and vibrations. The cup-like cavities from which the liquid mass was projected are still seen; and likewise the wavy surface a thick liquid generally assumes which cools while flowing. There are in many places deep fissures and yawning gulfs, with rugged broken

edges, while in other places are jagged heaps of rock that seem not to have been sufficiently heated to flow, but were forced upwards by a mighty agency, and then rent and shattered to their centre. The rock is filled with little pits and protuberances like air-bubbles; it is as hard as flint, and emits a sharp metallic sound when struck. I did not observe any approach to columnar or crystallized basalt.

The eastern and central portions of the Lejah have a more uniform rocky surface than the western. Between Mujeidel and Khubab, as I have already stated, there are mounds or tells of rock with intermediate little strips and patches of soil strewn thickly with large boulders and sharp angular stones. These features continue to near the village of Jedal, some three miles from the plain, as Burckhardt states;[7] but from this place inwards "the ground becomes uneven, the pasturing places less frequent, the rocks higher, and the road more difficult."[8] In the vicinity of Dâma so rough and rugged is the country, so deep the gullies and ravines, and so lofty the overhanging rocks, that the whole is a wild labyrinth which none but the Arabs can penetrate. Burckhardt's words convey a good idea of the interior. "In the interior parts of the Lejah the rocks are in many places cleft asunder, so that the whole hill appears shivered and in the act of falling down; the layers are generally horizontal, from six to eight feet or more in thickness, sometimes covering the hills, and inclining to their curve, as appears from the fissures which often traverse the rock from top to bottom."[9] The hills

[7] Travels in Syria, p. 110. [8] Id.
[9] Id. pp. 112-13.

here referred to are only mounds forty or fifty feet in height at the most.

It is worthy of remark how minutely this description accords with that of Josephus, written eighteen centuries ago. He says of the inhabitants of this region that it was extremely difficult to conquer them, or check their depredations, "as they had neither towns nor fields, but dwelt in caves that served as a refuge both for themselves and their flocks. They had besides cisterns of water and well-stored granaries, and were thus able to remain long in obscurity and to defy their enemies. The doors of their caves are so narrow that but one man can enter at a time, while within they are incredibly large and spacious. The ground above is almost a plain, but it is covered with rugged rocks, and is difficult of access, except when a guide points out the paths. These paths do not run in a straight course, but have many windings and turns." [1] Both Strabo and William of Tyre state that in Trachonitis there are great numbers of large caverns, in some of which the inhabitants reside, and in others they collect sufficient water in winter to supply their summer wants, while in others they store their grain and provisions. The latter also says that it is a stony district having neither streams nor rivers, but that the winter rains are collected in cisterns.[2]

The proofs of the identity of this province with the ancient ARGOB and more modern TRACHONITIS will be given in another place.[3]

[1] Ant. xv. 10, 1.

[2] Strab. Geog. xvi. p. 520; Wil. Tyr. Hist. in Gesta Dei per Francos, pp. 895, 1031-32; see also Reland, Pal., pp. 109-10.

[3] A summary of my views on this subject may be seen in the Journal of Sacred Literature for July, 1854, in an article entitled 'Historico-Geographical sketch of Bashan.'

Some of the ruined cities in the Lejah are of considerable extent, and the beauty of their architectural ornaments show their former wealth and importance. Edhrâ, Burâk, and Nejrân, have already been described. Dâma appears to have been the largest town in the interior, though its position seems of all others the most uninviting. It has, according to Burckhardt, about three hundred houses, most of them still in good preservation.[4] He observed some sculptured vine-leaves and grapes on a doorway, resembling those found at Kunawât. But next to Edhrâ the largest and most important city of this province appears to have been that on the northern border, now called *Musmeih*. Its ruins are three miles in circuit, and contain many buildings of considerable size and beauty. Burckhardt says that a temple he discovered here is one of the most elegant buildings in the Haurân. It has a portico of seven (?) Doric columns, three of which are standing. On the side of the door is a long Greek inscription, from which we learn that the ancient name of the city was *Phæno*, and that it was the capital of Trachonitis (Φαινησιοις μητροκωμια Τραχωνος). Nothing is known of its history besides what is contained on the inscriptions found on its ruined temples. It was an episcopal city during the early centuries of the Christian era, and was represented in the councils of Chalcedon and Ephesus.[5] I have already stated that this is the *Ænos* of the Peutinger Tables, the initial letter having been either accidentally omitted or obliterated.[6] There are traces of a Roman road between the city and Damascus, which also

[4] Travels in Syria, p. 110. [5] S. Paulo, Geog. Sac., p. 296.
[6] Reland, Pal., p. 421.

extends southward to Kunawât and Busrah. Its distance from the former city, as given in the Peutinger Tables, is twenty-seven Roman miles, and from Kunawât thirty-seven; and it will be seen that these numbers agree exactly with my map.

The delineation of the northern border of this province on the maps of Burckhardt, Berghaus, and all others since published, is very inaccurate. It will be observed from the preceding remarks that the village of Kureim is not in the interior, but on the borders of the Lejah, between Sh'aârah and Khŭbab. The direction of this border, too, has been represented as N.E., whereas it is nearly due E.

Our way now led across a rich plain which extends along the whole northern side of the Lejah. It is bounded on the north by the low range of Jebel Khiyârah, at the distance of about four miles from the rocks. On the whole of this great plain, at the place where we crossed it, and eastward to the path we had followed in going to Burâk, there is not a single town or village, nor, so far as I could see, are there any foundations of buildings. Farther westward, however, near the Hâj road, there is a considerable number of villages, some of which are still inhabited. And yet this plain has every appearance of having been at one time carefully cultivated. In fact, it is evident that from the earliest ages this district was exposed to the sudden incursions of the wild desert hordes, and none of the settled inhabitants would venture to erect their dwellings upon it. They constructed their habitations

within the rocky fastnesses, and a few of them also on the rugged slopes of Jebel Khiyârah, where several deserted villages may still be seen: they were thus secure against sudden attacks, and were also able to till the rich soil of the plain. Near the centre of the plain we crossed a stream whose source is near Sunamein on the Hâj road; it flows eastward during the winter till it falls into the Liwa, north-east of the town of Burâk. There are also several fountains on the border of the Lajah between Sh'aârah and Musmeih, which send out a small tributary to the Liwa.

After crossing the plain we swept round the eastern base of Jebel Khiyârah, and had on our right a low ridge, apparently an offshoot from Jebel Mâni'a. On the latter are several small deserted villages. At this place are traces of the Roman road. Having surmounted a gentle eminence, we came suddenly in sight of Deir 'Aly, with its orchards, gardens, and verdant fields. It was pleasing again to see the evidences of comparative security, industry, and permanent habitation, after the universal desolation that has spread over the whole province of the Haurân. The houses here are *all* new, and constructed, like those in Damascus, of wood and sun-dried bricks. We reached the village at 1·40, and received a hospitable welcome from the Druze sheikh.

Deir 'Aly is situated in the plain between the parallel ranges of Jebel Khiyârah and Jebel Mâni'a, about half an hour from the base of the latter. The former range does not extend so far east as the latter, but it runs farther west, crossing the Hâj road, which passes through it in a kind of gap. About a mile north of Deir 'Aly, on

the summit of a tell at the base of Jebel Mâni'a, is a domed tomb or *wely* called Mezâr el-Khaledîyeh.

February 14th.—As our guide and muleteer did not wish to venture nearer to Damascus than this village, we here dismissed them to return to their native mountains; and having engaged fresh animals for our servants, we set out for Damascus at 8·45. In half an hour we had on the left a small village called Haush el-Mâjedîyeh. Our road lay along the base of Jebel Mâni'a, in a north-westerly direction. At ten o'clock we had on our right a lofty conical peak called Tell Mâni'a. It forms a very conspicuous object over the whole surrounding country, both to the north and south. I had ascended it on a previous occasion, and found that the whole summit is covered with the ruins of an ancient castle. From this commanding point I was able to make a survey of the central section of the river 'Awaj, the ancient *Pharpar.*[7] In twenty minutes more we crossed the 'Awaj by a fine bridge at the village of Kesweh. There is here still a large and rapid stream, though two considerable canals are led off from it some miles farther up; one of them taking the water to the plain of Damascus, as has already been seen, and the other conveying a supply to several villages on the plain to the south. The river approaches Kesweh in a deep and tortuous channel, lined with poplars and some fruit-trees. On its southern side is a rocky plateau extending nearly as far east as the Hâj road, where it gives place to a fertile plain called Ard el-Khiyârah.

[7] A short account of an excursion from Damascus to Kesweh and Tell Mâni'a may be seen in the Bibliotheca Sacra for April, 1854, pp. 342-44.

The Hâj road crosses the river by this bridge and runs over the plain in a direction S. by W., passing Khan Denûn, distant 1½ mile; then the gap in the Jebel Khiyârah 5 miles further; then Ghubâghib 4 miles; then Sunamein 5 miles; then Eshmiskîn 13 miles; and then Mezarîb 6 miles.[8]

Crossing the bridge and ascending the steep bank by a well-paved road, we had the large village of Kesweh on our left; immediately behind it rises the western section of Jebel el-Aswad. The road runs along its eastern base for a mile and a half. On the right there is a rich and beautiful vale, through which the 'Awaj winds, sweeping to the north round the projecting spurs of Jebel Mâni'a. After running in this direction for about half a mile it again turns eastward down the valley seven miles to Nejha. In half an hour from Kesweh we commenced the ascent of the eastern section of Jebel el-Aswad. The elevation at this place does not exceed 300 feet, and immediately on the left it sinks down into the plain. On the right it extends in a broken chain to Nejha, its greatest height being not more than 500 feet. Its sides have an easy slope, and are in some places thickly covered with boulders of basalt. In half an hour we had crossed the hills and entered the plain of Damascus. At ten minutes from their base we crossed the little stream called the Berdy, whose waters are collected by a sub-

[8] Burckhardt's distances along this road to Sunamein are as follows:—Kesweh to Khan Denûn, 45 min.; to Jebel Khiyârah, 2h. 15m.; to Ghubâghib, 1h. 15m.; to Sunamein, 2 h. He says the bearing of the line of road from Kesweh is S. by E.; but this is a mistake. The bearing of Khan Denûn from Kesweh is S. 17° W.; and the bearing of the gap in the Jebel Khiyârah from the summit of Tell Mâni'a is S. 18° W.

terranean canal at the village of Ashrafîyeh, about a mile to the west of the road. A fast ride of an hour and five minutes now brought us to the gate of Damascus, Bâbwâbet Ullah. We had crossed several small streams like the Berdy in the interval; and also the village of Kadam, a quarter of an hour from the gate. The whole distance from Kesweh to the city gate is nearly nine miles.

CHAPTER XV.

BOUNDARIES AND PROVINCES OF BASHAN.

The kingdoms of Sihon and Og — The boundary of *Gilead* and *Bashan* identified — Provinces of *Bashan*.

GAULANITIS.— Its southern border — Site of *Gadara* — of *Gamala* — of *Gerasa* and *Arbela* — of *Abila* — The Mountains of *Gilead* — The Jaulân identical with *Gaulanitis*.

TRACHONITIS.— Identical with *Argob* — The *Saccæa* and *Mons Alsadamus* of Ptolemy identified — Extent and boundaries.

AURANITIS.— The same as the HAURAN — Extent and boundaries.

BATANÆA.— Distinct from BASHAN — Its position — Its modern name.

The "mountains and oaks of Bashan" — Where situated.

ARGOB.— Situated in Bashan — Identical with *Trachonitis* and the Lejah — *Kenath*.

ITURÆA.— Not included in *Bashan* — Its ancient name and history — Its modern name and position.

As my researches in the Haurân have led me to conclusions regarding the bounuaries of the ancient kingdom of Bashan considerably different from the published opinions of most if not all modern geographers, I shall now give a brief summary of my views, with the arguments on which they are based.

The whole country east of the Jordan, which fell into the hands of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, was, at the period of its conquest, divided between two powerful monarchs, *Sihon* and *Og*. The kingdom of the former extended from the Arnon on the south to the Jabbok on the north,[1] and was occupied

[1] Num. xxi. 23-30; Deut. iv. 47-49. It will be observed that the greater part, if not the whole, of this kingdom had at one time be-

by Reuben and Gad.[2] The kingdom of Og embraced that part of *Gilead* which lay north of the river Jabbok, and the whole of *Bashan;* all this territory, with the exception of a narrow strip along the east bank of the Jordan, was given to the half-tribe of Manasseh.[3]

There is no description in the works of any of the ancient geographers of the northern border of Gilead, or the southern border of Bashan; and neither is there any clear or definite statement of the positions and extent of the several provinces into which Bashan was subsequently divided. There are however cities mentioned as belonging to Bashan and Gilead, the sites of which have been identified; and others are referred to as being near to, or in certain directions from, well-known localities. It is only from a careful comparison of these notices, and an examination of the present features of the country around them, that we can approximate to the truth. The modern divisions of the district also afford important assistance, as most of the ancient names still remain, and are applied to well-defined provinces. There is one thing which creates considerable confusion in ancient writers, and renders their topographical remarks much more difficult to be understood—when cities rose to importance, provinces were attached to them and called by their name; and when these cities declined, and neighbouring rivals grew up, the provinces of the former were, in whole or in part, absorbed in those of the latter. Thus, for instance, Golan was a city of Bashan, and had a large territory

longed to Moab, and was conquered by Sihon, who established the seat of his government in the city of Heshbon. The northern section of this kingdom embraced the southern half of Gilead.

[2] Deut. iii. 12.

[3] Deut. iii. 13, and iv. 47-49.

attached to it, and called *Gaulanitis;* Gamala was a city of Gaulanitis, and its territory, *Gamalitis*, afterwards embraced a section of the former. Gadara, again, was a city of Gilead, and had its district, "the country of the Gadarenes:" [4] and Pella was another city of Gilead, whose subject province at one time absorbed all Gadaris.[5] Thus took place a series of changes in divisions, and boundaries, and appellations, as years rolled on. But while the different provinces of Bashan and Gilead changed their names, we have every reason to believe that these countries themselves remained intact and clearly defined.

It is important to observe that the ancient province of Gilead was divided between Sihon and Og, the one having that section which lay on the south side of the Jabbok, and the other the portion on the north side of that river.[6] Gad's inheritance, however, extended north of the Jabbok, embracing a narrow tract in the valley of the Ghôr, along the east bank of the Jordan, as far as the sea of Chinnereth.[7] The borders of Manasseh extended far to the south of the parallel of the sea of Chinnereth, and of the river *Yarmuk* (the present *Sheriat el-Mandhûr*), so as to embrace the *half of Gilead* which fell to the lot of that tribe.[8] It appears that this tribe possessed the *whole mountainous region* as far south as Mahanaim, and probably to the banks of the Jabbok.[9]

[4] Luke viii. 26; Joseph. Bel. Jud. iii. 3, 1.

[5] Compare Joseph. Ant. xiii. 13, 5, and Luke viii. 26, with Joseph. Bel. Jud., iii. 3, 3.

[6] Josh. xii. 1-6.

[7] Josh. xiii. 24-28.

[8] Josh. xiii. 30, 31; Num. xxxii. 39, 40.

[9] Compare Josh. xiii. 26, and Deut. iii. 12, with Josh. xiii. 30, 31, and Deut. iii. 13. There is an apparent contradiction in these passages, but it is easily explained. The border of Gad and Manasseh is said to be at Mahanaim in the one place, and at the banks of the Jabbok in the

Having these facts before us, we are prepared to consider the statements and incidental notices that tend to define the boundary between Bashan and Gilead; but as in a consideration of this subject frequent reference must be made to one of the provinces into which Bashan was in later times divided, I shall begin by a notice of that province. The remaining boundaries of Bashan on the west, north, and east will also be defined under the several provinces which lay in those quarters.

When the kingdom of Israel was subdued by the Assyrians, and the power of the Jews in Bashan overthrown, it appears that the ancient tribes, before kept in subjection, rose to importance, and the country was rent into provinces.[1] Some of these provinces, as will be seen in the sequel, were of ancient origin, and had been distinct principalities previous to the time when Og or his predecessors united them under one sceptre. Before the time of the Babylonish captivity Bashan is universally spoken of as a whole; but in writings subsequent to that period this country is mentioned as divided into *four provinces*, namely, Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and Batanæa.[2]

other. Now, Mahanaim is considerably north of the Jabbok. But we know that the territories of Gad and Manasseh touched each other as far north as the sea of Chinnereth, and consequently both Mahanaim and the Jabbok may have been on the borders. The southern section of Manasseh included the east, and the northern section of Gad the west, of the country between the Jabbok and the Yarmuk. Num. xiii. 27.

[1] See Lightfoot, Horæ Heb. et Talmud. in Evang. Luk., Chor. Pauc. sec. iii.

[2] That the whole kingdom of Bashan was comprehended in these provinces will be seen by a careful comparison of the following passages in Josephus: Ant. iv. 5, 3, and 7, 4; ix. 8, 1; xiii. 13, 5; Bel. Jud. iii. 3; iv. 7, 3.

GAULANITIS.

The origin of this province is easily traced in Scripture. *Golan*, a city of Bashan, was given, out of the possessions of the half-tribe of Manasseh, to the Levites,[3] and was also appointed one of the three cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan.[4] When it rose to eminence, a large province was subject to it, and took its name—hence *Gaulanitis*. The extent and boundaries of this province may be pretty accurately defined by a careful comparison of several statements in the writings of Josephus. That author, when giving the boundaries of Galilee, says it has on the east "Hippene and Gadaris, and Gaulanitis and the borders of the kingdom of Agrippa."[5] From this it appears that Gadaris and Gaulanitis were border provinces. Now, as Gadara was in Gilead,[6] it is of great importance to ascertain its exact position. Of the site of Gadara there can be no doubt, as there are certain natural or physical marks that tend precisely to define its position. It is described by Eusebius as situated on a mountain on the east side of the Jordan, over against Scythopolis and Tiberias; and at the foot of the mountain are hot springs;[7] and we learn from the Itineraries that it was 16 Roman miles distant from each of these cities.[8] Now if those distances and descriptions are compared with the position of *Um Keis*, and with Burckhardt's account of these ruins, and the warm springs at the base of the hill on which they

[3] Josh. xxi. 27. [4] Josh. xx. 8; Deut. iv. 43.

[5] Joseph. Bel. Jud. iii. 3. 1.

[6] Id. Ant. xiii. 13, 5; Bel. Jud. iv. 7, 3. In the latter passage it is called the capital of Peræa.

[7] Onomasticon, s. v. Gadara, p. 79. [8] Reland, Pal., pp. 419-21.

are situated, we believe every reader will be convinced of the identity of those places.[9] The town of Gadara therefore stood on the south bank of the Yarmuk, only about two miles distant from that river, and Gilead must consequently have extended as far north at this place as the banks of the river.

But, again, Josephus remarks in another place, when relating the history of the siege of the city of *Gamala* by the Romans, "With these also (Gischala and Mount Tabor) rebelled the city of Gamala, situated on the other side of the lake (of Chinnereth) *over against Tarichæa.* This city lay on the borders of Agrippa's kingdom, as also did Sogana and Seleucia. And these were both of the region of Gaulanitis—Sogana of the upper part, which was called Gaulana, and Gamala of the lower."[1] Now, as the city of Tarichæa was situated at the southern extremity of the sea of Galilee,[2] Gamala must also have been near the southern part of that sea; and its province would thus naturally extend along the northern bank of the Yarmuk, the course of which river is in some places not over a mile south of the parallel of Tarichæa. I think, therefore, it cannot be questioned that the Yarmuk formed the boundary-line between Gaulanitis and Gadaris, and consequently between Bashan and Gilead.

It is just possible, however, that Bashan may have stretched across the Yarmuk on the eastern side of Gadara; but if so, where do we place the "half of Gilead" which Manasseh possessed? It lay north of the Jabbok, and east of the northern section of Gad's territory; and if we

[9] Travels in Syr., pp. 270-73, and pp. 276-77.

[1] Joseph. Bel. Jud. iv. 1, 1. [2] Robinson's Bib. Res., iii. p. 263.

extend Bashan south of the Yarmuk, we leave no room for it. But, besides, Gerasa was a city of Gilead,[3] and Arbela was likewise a city of Gilead;[4] and as these are both far to the eastward of Gadara, and the latter only a very few miles south of the Yarmuk,[5] Gilead must have here also extended as far north as that river.

There is one statement of Reland's which would seem to militate against this view. In noticing the city of Abila he calls it "*Abila Batanæa;*"[6] and it is now generally believed that the modern *Abil*, a few miles *south* of the Yarmuk, marks the site of this place. If Reland's opinion is correct that Abila was in Batanæa, then Bashan must have extended at least a few miles south of the Yarmuk. But I cannot see that he has any good ground on which to rest his statement. Under the word *Astaroth Carnaim* Eusebius says—"There are at present two villages in Batanæa of this name, nine miles distant from each other, *between the cities of Adara and Abila;*"[7] and in another place he says that there is a city called "Abila the Wine-bearing" twelve miles east of Gadara.[8] Reland assumes that these two are identical, and is probably correct in this: but when he states farther that this Abila is in Batanæa, he has no ground to rest upon; and the several passages which he adduces from ancient authors seem to convey the idea that it was in the same province as Pella and Gadara.[9] The city might easily be situated within the borders of Gilead, and yet, on account of its import-

[3] Compare Bel. Jud. iii. 3, with Ant. xiii. 13, 5.
[4] Euseb. Onomasticon, s. v. Arbela, p. 21.
[5] Bib. Res., App., p. 163; Burck., Travels in Syria, pp. 268-9.
[6] Pal., p. 525.
[7] Onomasticon, p. 28.
[8] Onomasticon, s. v. Abila, p. 4.
[9] Reland, Pal., pp. 525-6.

ance, be selected with Adara to mark the position of two intervening places in Bashan.

This view of the extension of Gilead as far north as the banks of the Yarmuk is still farther strengthened by the words of Hieronymus. He says that the mountains of Gilead are joined to Libanus, and extend as far as the ancient territory of Sihon the Amorite. He also states that these mountains were possessed by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh; and that in them was situated the city of Galaad, which Machir the son of Manasseh took from the Amorites.[1] Now it is evident from these words that the mountain-range alluded to is that which commences on the south bank of the Yarmuk, and extends southward on the east side of the Jordan; and as these mountains cover the whole breadth of the territory possessed by the Israelites, Gilead must have extended as far north as the Yarmuk.

The southern border of Gaulanitis being thus fixed, we have no difficulty in tracing the western. Josephus, in describing the land of Israel, thus writes, after having enumerated the provinces west of the Jordan and those of Peræa:—"And besides these there was the region of Gamala, Gaulanitis, and Batanæa and Trachonitis, which are also parts of the kingdom of Agrippa. And this country begins at Mount Libanus *and the fountains of the Jordan, and reaches breadthways to the lake of Tiberias.*"[2] And in another place he says that Sogana and Seleucia formed part of Upper Gaulanitis, and that the latter was situated on the lake Semechonitis.[3] From these

[1] Onomasticon, s. v. Galaad. [2] Bel. Jud. iii. 3.
[3] Bel. Jud. iv. 1, 1.

statements, and from the fact before observed, that, of the provinces of Bashan, Gaulanitis alone bordered on Galilee,[4] we conclude that this province extended along the whole western side of Bashan, from the banks of the Yarmuk to the fountains of the Jordan;[5] and that, consequently, its border was the Jordan and its lakes.

For the determination of the northern border we have not such clear data; but we may conclude, from the words of Josephus above quoted, that it did not extend farther north than the fountains of the Jordan. A line, therefore, drawn from Bâniâs over the mountains, along the Roman road to the ruins of Kuneitirah, would probably mark the boundary of the province. It is important to observe here that the modern province of *Jaulân*, which is manifestly identical with *Golan*, so far corresponds in its boundaries with Gaulanitis; we may therefore safely presume that its north-eastern and eastern border will also mark that of the ancient province, especially so as we find the names of other ancient provinces beside it. From Kuneitirah the border runs across the plain in a south-eastern direction to the Hâj road, and then turns southward along that road to the banks of the Yarmuk.

The north-western section of this territory is now sometimes called *Ard el-Kuneitirah;* but it is well known that the whole district is included under the name *Jaulân;* and this is the case in a list I possess of its ruined towns and villages, in the accuracy of which I have every confi-

[4] Bel. Jud. iii. 3, 1.

[5] Reland has some excellent remarks on this subject. He concludes:—"Quumque Gaulonitis se extendat a mari Tiberiadis usque ad fontes Jordanis," &c. &c.—Pal., p. 108.

dence. This list contains the names of *one hundred and twenty-seven places*, all of which, with the exception of about *eleven*, are now uninhabited, and mere heaps of ruin. The whole country is overrun by wandering Arabs, who only cultivate a few patches of its rich soil. The eastern and southern section is a flat table-land, with, in general, a good soil. The western side, as seen from Tiberias, resembles the declivities of a mountain-range furrowed by torrents and ravines. This is occasioned by the depression of the lake and the elevation of the plateau, which is nearly 3000 ft. above the surface of the water. The mountain-range on the north-west, to which allusion has already been made, presents pleasing and varied scenery. The sides have a gentle slope, and are almost everywhere clothed with oak-forests.

TRACHONITIS.

Though at first sight it would seem as if *Trachon* or *Trachonitis* (Τραχων or Τραχωνιτις) were only a comparatively modern name applied to one of the provinces of Bashan, yet there is a strong probability that it is in reality of very ancient origin, and was only revived in the time of the Greek writers. We may find the Hebrew origin of Τραχων, which signifies "a rough stony district," in the word ארגב, "a heap of stones" or "a stony place;" and this latter was the ancient name of a part of Og's kingdom in Bashan.[6] Josephus, when relating how the various countries were peopled by the posterity of Noah, says that Uz, the son of Aram, founded *Trachonitis* and

[6] See below, under ARGOB.

Damascus.[7] And this view is rendered highly probable by the fact that the Targums read תרכונא instead of ארנב, in Deut. iii. 14, and 1 Kings iv. 13.[8]

From several statements of Josephus it is seen that this province lay on the east of Gaulanitis, and bordered on both Auranitis and Batanæa.[9] It also appears to have extended farther north than Gaulanitis,[1] and to have bordered on the territory of Damascus.[2] Lightfoot, with whom Reland agrees, maintains that Trachonitis lay on the eastern border of the transjordanic country now under consideration. This is in part true; but when he says farther that Batanæa lay between it and Galilee, I cannot admit the soundness of his reasoning. His arguments may be here given, especially as, while engaged in examining them, I shall have an opportunity of advancing what I consider to be the truth. *First*,—In the Targums it is said that Trachonitis extends southward to *Bozrah*, which is situated on the borders of Peræa; and Josephus having shown that it extends farther north than Gaulanitis, it thus intersects the country from north to south. Batanæa cannot consequently be *south* of it. Now, suppose this be admitted, it does not follow that Batanæa must be on the *west* side of it; it may be on the *east* or *south-east*. *Second*,—He quotes the words of Ptolemy, who says that the town of Saccæa is in the eastern part of Batanæa, and that there, under Mount Alsadamus, are the Trachonite Arabs; and he thence concludes that Trachonitis lies on the eastern side of Batanæa. I think, however, that the

[7] Ant. i. 6, 4.
[8] Lightfoot, Har. Heb. s. v. *Trachonitis*.
[9] Bel. Jud. iv. 1, 1, with i. 20, 4.
[1] Ib. iii. 10, 7.
[2] Ant. xv. 10.

full meaning of Ptolemy's words will be expressed by stating that *Trachonitis bordered upon Batanæa near to Saccæa*, which is the fact. It has already been shown that the town of Saccæa lay on the northern declivities of the Jebel Haurân, and that the district in which it is situated is at the present day called *Ard el-Bathanyeh*, which is manifestly identical with the Greek word *Batanæa;* and it has also been shown that the stony province of the Lejah, the ancient Trachonitis, runs along the base of these mountains only two or three miles from Saccæa. From these things we see that Ptolemy's description is minutely accurate, but that Lightfoot's conclusions from it are erroneous. *Third*,—Josephus mentions Gaulanitis, Gamalitis, Batanæa, and Trachonitis, and thus distinguished, as Lightfoot truly observes, between the Batanæa, or *Bashan*, near Galilee, which included the two first provinces, and the other Batanæa, a mere section of the former.[3] He concludes, from the order of the names, that Batanæa lay between Trachonitis and Gaulanitis; but there is little weight in this testimony, and it is opposed to the direct evidence of Josephus in another place, where, after stating that the Roman emperor had taken the provinces of Batanæa and Trachon from Zenodorus and bestowed them on Herod the Great,[4] he adds, that after Zenodorus' death he gave Herod the remainder of his territory, namely, "*the country lying between Trachon and Galilee.*"[5] Batanæa, therefore, could not have been on the west of Trachon.[6]

[3] It is worthy of remark in this place that the ancient name of the kingdom is Βασαν, but Josephus sometimes uses the name of the province, Βαταναια, instead of the former.

[4] Ant. xv. 10, 1. [5] Ib., sec. 3. [6] Lightfoot, *ut sup.*

It thus appears that both ancient descriptions and modern observations agree in locating the province of Trachonitis on the north-western side of Batanæa. We have already seen how accurately the statements of ancient geographers, as to the geographical features of this region, accord with the present state and appearance of the Lejah; and the monumental evidence in proof of the identification has also been pointed out.[7] There are some things which show, however, that Trachonitis must have been of greater extent than the Lejah. In the Targums it is said to have extended as far south as Bozrah; and we know that KENATH, now identified with *Kunawât*, was a city of Trachon.[8] It consequently included the stony tract along the base of the Jebel Haurân, but probably never extended so far south as Busrah. Sometimes the name was applied in a general sense by ancient writers, and included one or more of the neighbouring provinces.[9] It is also evident, from the great number of ruined towns on the borders of the Lejah, that a considerable portion of the surrounding plain must have been attached to them. I therefore suppose that the plain on the western side, as far as the Hâj road, was embraced in Trachonitis, and likewise that on the north to the Jebel Khiyârah, with a considerable section of the plain on the east, north of Ard el-Bathanyeh.

[7] See above, vol. ii. p. 112.

[8] Euseb. Onomasticon, s. v. *Canath*, p. 48.

[9] See, for example, Luke iii. 1, where the "Region of Trachonitis" must be understood as embracing Batanæa and Auronitis. Compare Joseph. Ant. xvii. 11, 4.

AURANITIS.

In describing the boundaries of the "Land of Israel," Ezekiel twice mentions the HAURAN in connection with the eastern border.[1] *Haurân*, חוֹרָן, is the old Hebrew name; and *Haurân*, حوران is the modern Arabic name. The Greek form is *Auranitis*, Αυρανιτις. This province is several times mentioned by Josephus in connection with the others into which Bashan was divided.[2] In the days of Herod the Great, Zenodorus the robber had large possessions in this region, and this province was subject to him. In consequence of his depredations, however, the Roman emperor resolved to strip him of his possessions and to give them to Herod; but to prevent this as far as possible, Zenodorus sold Auranitis to the Arabians, whose kingdom embraced the mountain region of Idumæa and a considerable section of Peræa.[3] From this circumstance we would naturally conclude that it bordered on the kingdom of Arabia, and consequently lay on the southern side of Trachonitis. Now, in this position there is, in the present day, an extensive and rich plain, called *Haurân*, which we at once identify with the Greek *Auranitis* and the *Haurân* of the Bible. In more recent times the name Haurân has been used in a more general and less definite sense; for example, in Bohaeddin's History of Saladin it appears to include the whole region east of Jordan and north of Sheriat el-Mandhûr.[4] It is also described by another Arab geographer as "a wide region under the

[1] Ch. xlvii. 16 and 18. [2] Ant. xv. 10, 1 and 2. [3] Ib.
[4] Vit. Salad. ed. Schult. p. 70, &c.

sovereignty of Damascus toward the south, in which are many large villages and cultivated fields. Its capital is Busrah; and belonging to it are Edhr'aât, and Zer'a and others."[5] Abulfeda makes Busrah the capital of the Haurân.[6] And at the present time the name Haurân is applied in this general way, *by those at a distance*, to the whole country east of Jaulân; thus embracing the plain, the Lejah, and the mountains; but by the inhabitants themselves it is used in a much more restricted sense, comprehending only the plain on the south of the Lejah, with a narrow strip along its western border. Its whole surface is perfectly flat, and the soil is esteemed among the most fertile in Syria. It contains many inhabited villages, and many towns and villages deserted or in ruins. In Dr. Smith's lists there are 149 names; these, however, include about thirty on the south and east of Busrah, which are beyond the limits of the Haurân.[7] As far as I was able to ascertain, the southern border of this province runs from Busrah in a north-western direction by Ghŭsam and Remtha to the Sheriat el-Mandhûr.

BATANÆA.

I have already observed that Josephus uses the name Batanæa in two different senses. In one place he says Golan is a city of *Batanæa*, where it is evident he means *Bashan*;[8] while in another place he mentions Batanæa

[5] Ib., Index Geog. s. v. *Hauran.*

[6] Tab. Syr. ed. Reisk, p. 99.

[7] Robinson's Bib. Res., vol. iii., App., pp. 150-54.

[8] Ant. iv. 7, 4. The original is Και Γαυλαδημαν δε εν τη Βαταναιαδι.

as a *province*, distinct from Trachonitis and Gaulanitis.[9] This is probably the reason why Eusebius states that "*Batanæa* is the modern name of Bashan."[1] The latter author evidently confounded the *province* with the *kingdom;* and thus he speaks of Beeshtera, Ashtaroth, Gaulon, Gargasi, and many other cities far apart, as being situated in Batanæa.[2] The true position of this province I have already pointed out under the word TRACHONITIS; and I there also stated the proofs of its identity with *Ard el-Bathanyeh.*

The notices we have of this district in Arab authors are few, brief, and not very definite.[3] The name, though well known to all the inhabitants, is not now much used by them; the district is generally called *Jebel ed-Druze.* So far as I was able to ascertain, from minute inquiries upon the spot, Ard el-Bathanyeh includes the whole range of Jebel Haurân, with the exception of a narrow strip along its western base, in which are the important towns Suweideh, Kunawât, Suleim, and Shŭhba. It extends from the plain below the lofty tell Khaledîyeh on the north, to Sŭlkhad on the south; and from Kunawât to the great plain eastward. Dr. Smith distinguishes between the Jebel Haurân and Ard el-Bathanyeh, and says the latter is "back of the mountains." This distinction I did not find recognised by the natives; and the relative positions of some of the towns and villages on his own lists I found to be quite at variance with his statement. For example,

[9] Bel. Jud. iii. 3.

[1] Onomasticon, s. v. *Basan*, p. 34.

[2] Reland, Pal., pp. 197-98.

[3] Abulfed. Tab. Syr. ed. Reisk. p. 97; Historia Anteislam. ed. Fleischer, pp. 26 and 207.

Juneineh, Shŭka, and Nimreh, are classed in the *Jebel;* while Bathanyeh, Ta'ala, and Deir esh-Shĕîr, are placed in Ard el-Bathanyeh.[4] And yet the latter are considerably farther west than the former, as may be seen by a glance at my map.

I have not been able to find one solitary passage in any ancient author that would seem to favour the opinion, almost universally adopted by geographers, that the province of Batanæa lay on the south-east of Gaulanitis, and principally south of the Yarmuk. Lightfoot and Reland appear to have been the first who advanced this theory. Burckhardt, who does not often give an opinion on such subjects, would identify Batanæa with *Butein*, but the names have no resemblance to each other.[5] In the Appendix to Dr. Robinson's Biblical Researches this province is rightly located,[6] but in his maps it is, strangely enough, placed almost wholly in Gilead.

The boundaries of the kingdom of Bashan being thus laid down, a question naturally arises, "Where are the mountains and oaks of Bashan that are celebrated in the Word of God?" The Psalmist thus writes: "The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan, an high hill, as the hill of of Bashan."[7] Nahum mentions them in connection with Lebanon and Carmel: "Bashan languisheth, and Carmel and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence."[8] Isaiah seems to compare the oaks of

[4] Bib. Res., App., pp. 157-59.
[5] Travels in Syria, p. 287.
[6] Bib. Res., App., p. 158.
[7] Ps. lxviii. 15.
[8] Nahum i. 4, 5.

Bashan with the cedars of Lebanon: "The day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan." [9] And Ezekiel informs us, when speaking of Tyre's glory, that her mariners made their oars of the "oaks of Bashan." [1] These several references, with some others of a like character, show that both the mountains and oaks of Bashan were celebrated in former days. All modern writers without exception, I believe, look for and find these mountains and their oaks between the Yarmuk and the Jabbok. It appears somewhat strange to identify the hills of Bashan with the mountains of Gilead, and yet Gilead, as has been seen, extends as far north as the Yarmuk. There is one whole mountain-range comprehended within the borders of Bashan, which for the beauty of its scenery, the richness of its pastures, and the extent of its oak forests, is not surpassed in this land, and to the present day it retains the ancient name, being called *Ard el-Bathanyeh*, "the country of Batanæa, or Bashan." May not these be the "hills of Bashan"? and may not the forests that clothe them be the representatives of the "oaks of Bashan"?

There is another section of a mountain-range within this ancient kingdom which has also, as we have seen, extensive oak-forests. It is the Jebel el-Heish, the southern spur of Hermon.

[9] Isa. ii. 12, 13. [1] Chap. xxvii. 6.

ARGOB.

Before a sketch of Bashan can be considered as complete some inquiries must be made about the district of ARGOB, and some space given to a recital of such statements regarding it as we may find in the Bible and other ancient records. My first object will be to ascertain whether this province was included in whole or in part in Bashan, and then, if it be in Bashan, I shall inquire whether there is any evidence to show where it was situated. The first of these objects will be most satisfactorily attained by a comparison of the several parts of Scripture in which Argob is mentioned.

Having vanquished Sihon king of Heshbon, the Israelites went up the way to Bashan, and Og gave them battle at Edrei, where he was completely defeated. The historian then adds, "We took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them; threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars, beside unwalled towns a great many."[2] From this passage it would almost seem as if Argob was only another name for Bashan; other passages, however, are more explicit upon this point. In the same chapter it is said, "And this land which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half Mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and the Gadites. And the rest of Gilead and all Bashan gave I unto the half-tribe of Manasseh; *all the region of Argob, with all Bashan*, which was called

[2] Deut. iii. 4, 5.

the land of giants. Jair, the son of Manasseh, took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maacathi, and called them after his own name, *Bashan-havoth-jair*, unto this day. And I gave Gilead unto Machir." [3] Machir was a son of Manasseh and father of Gilead, and was the progenitor of that section of the tribe that obtained their possession east of the Jordan,[4] and Jair was also a descendant of Machir by the female line.[5] Now it appears that this Jair possessed *twenty-three* cities in the land of Gilead; but he took besides "Geshur and Aram, with the towns of Jair, with Kenath and the towns thereof, even threescore cities." [6] These passages when viewed in connection, clearly convey the idea that the last-mentioned "threescore cities" conquered by Jair are identical with the "region of Argob," which also contained, as is stated in the first passage, "threescore cities." And farther, it is evident from these statements that the *twenty-three cities of Gilead* are quite distinct from the *threescore cities of Argob*. These points, which are of great importance as tending to identify the position of Argob, are fully confirmed by the following passages. In defining the territories of the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua thus writes: "And Moses gave inheritance unto the half-tribe of Manasseh . . . and their coast was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, *and all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, threescore cities;* and half Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan." [7] This passage, when compared with those above quoted, leaves

[3] Deut. iii. 12-15. [4] Ib. 15.
[5] 1 Chron. ii. 21, 22. [6] Ib. 23. [7] Josh. xiii. 30.

it without a shadow of doubt that the "threescore cities of Jair" which are in Bashan are identical with the cities of Argob which Jair conquered and called "Bashan-havoth-jair," that is, "the cities of Jair in Bashan." But again, when Solomon placed twelve officers over the twelve sections of the land of Israel, we read that Geber was appointed to Ramoth-gilead, "and to him pertained the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, *which are in Gilead;* to him also pertained the region of Argob, *which is in Bashan, threescore great cities*, with walls and brazen bars."[8] These towns of Jair situated in Gilead are the "*twenty-three* cities" above alluded to as having been possessed by Jair before he conquered the sixty cities of Bashan, and which are called in another place *Havoth-jair*, "the towns of Jair."[9] I therefore conclude generally that the "threescore cities" called *Bashan-havoth-jair* pertained to the land of Argob, which was situated in Bashan; and that the "twenty-three cities" called *Havoth-jair* were distinct from the former, and situated in Gilead. Eusebius appears to have been aware of this distinction, for he thus writes: "Havoth-jair, this is Bashan (or in Bashan). The towns of Jair, which the half-tribe of Manasseh received, *are in Mount Gilead, and they are in the district of Batanæa* (or Bashan) *called Gonea.*" But Jerome, his translator and commentator, had a theory of his own, and gives a singular and even unintelligible account of these cities.[1]

[8] 1 Kings iv. 13. [9] Jud. xxxii. 41.

[1] Eusebius's words are:—Αυωθ ιαιρ, αυτη εστιν ἡ Βασαν. εισι δε κωμαι Ιαιρ εν τῳ ὁρει Γαλααδ ἁς ελαβιτο ἡμισυ φυλῆς Μανασσῆ· και εισιν εν τῃ καλουμενῃ γωνιᾳ τῆς Βαταναιας. Hieronymus's gloss is as follows:—Avothjair, quod interpretatur σταυλις Air. Hæc est in Basan, in qua sunt vici

Having thus ascertained that the region of Argob is in Bashan, it remains to be seen whether there is any evidence tending to identify its position. From one of the passages above quoted it appears that the city of *Kenath* was in Argob, and I have before shown that this city was likewise in *Trachonitis*. Now, if we add to this fact the arguments already advanced while considering the situation and boundaries of the latter province, it will be seen that we have very strong reasons for concluding that *Trachonitis* and *Argob* were identical, or rather that Trachonitis was the Greek rendering of the Hebrew Argob.

I am quite aware that Eusebius identifies Argob with the castle of *Erga* or *Ragaba*, situated fifteen miles west of Gerasa, and only a few miles north of the Jabbok.[2] In this he is followed by Reland,[3] Robinson,[4] and Ritter.[5] But this Ragaba is manifestly in Gilead, and must besides have been included in the territory of Gad, since it is about fifteen miles south-west of Mahanaim.

I have now completed my sketch of the ancient kingdom of Bashan; and it will be observed that in the minutest particulars my researches bear testimony to the faithfulness of Bible narrative and description. The numerous and extensive ruined cities and villages scattered over its surface tell of its former populousness, and are the present memorials of its ancient strength and greatness. The oak forests still cover its mountain-sides; its

sexaginta in Monte Galaad, qui ceciderunt in sortem dimidiæ tribus Manasse: qui locus nunc vocatur Golam in terra Batanea. See Onomasticon, s. v. Avothjair, p. 30.

[2] Onomasticon, s. v. *Argob*, p. 22.

[3] Palæst. pp. 579, 808, 959.

[4] Bib. Res. vol. iii., App. p. 166.

[5] Pal. und Syr., ii. 1041.

pastures are still celebrated for their richness, and its soil is proverbial for its fertility. The ancient names too cling to it yet; and we have Bashan, and Golan, and Kenath, and Salchah, and Bozrah, and Kerioth, and Haurân, and Edrei, but little changed by the lapse of long centuries. Thus does it appear that the more extensive our research, and the more minute our investigations, the more full and accurate will be our illustrations of the Word of God. Every new discovery in this land is a new evidence of the truth of the Bible. And should the day ever come when an advancing Christianity, bearing peace and civilization in its glorious train, shall again people these cities and cultivate these plains—then, from inscribed tablets and ruins now buried, will new and striking evidences be brought to light of the truth of that religion which yet far more strongly evidences itself by the blessings it diffuses.

ITURÆA.

There is still another province, which, though not included in Bashan, formed for a time a portion of the territories of Manasseh; and as it lies on the northern border of Bashan, between that kingdom and Damascus, I shall now give a brief sketch of it. The name of this province, *Ituræa*, occurs only once in the Scriptures in its Greek form, where Luke includes it in the tetrarchy of Philip.[6] In the book of Genesis, however, we find the name *Jetur* applied to one of the sons of Ishmael; and it is afterwards said that this was the name of the province possessed by him.[7] It was the usual mode in those

[6] Luke iii. 1. [7] Gen. xxv. 15, 16.

early ages for the leader of a tribe to settle in some unoccupied district, and to call it by his name. We learn that long after that period the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh made war with the Hagarites or Ishmaelites, namely, with *Jetur*, Nephesh, and Nodab, conquered their territories,[8] and dwelt in their land until the captivity. And in immediate connection with the latter statement it is said that "the children of the half-tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land, *and they increased from Bashan unto Baal-hermon, and Senir, and Mount Hermon.*"[9] Now this points distinctly to the position of the district previously occupied by Jetur and his brethren. It lay between Bashan and Hermon. It appears, however, that the Ishmaelites merely retired for a time from this province, as Aristobulus king of the Jews, in the end of the second century before Christ, conquered Ituræa, and gave the inhabitants their choice either to embrace the Jewish faith or leave their country. They chose the former.[1] Herod the Great afterwards obtained possession of it (B.C. 20).

During all these changes the Ituræans maintained a distinctive nationality. This may probably have arisen in some degree from the position of their country, as they could during troublous times retire to the fastnesses of Hermon, where there was ample pasturage for their cattle, and also some fine land for cultivation. This view is strengthened by the words of Strabo, who observes, when describing the kingdom of Chalcis, that it was a mountainous region inhabited by Ituræans and Arabs.[2]

[8] 1 Chron. v. 19-22.
[1] Joseph. Ant. xiii. 11, 3.
[9] 1 Chron. v. 23.
[2] Strabo. Geog., xvi. p. 520.

Both Lightfoot and Reland supposed that Ituræa and Auranitis were identical; and the principal argument given in favour of their view is, that, while Luke states that Philip was tetrarch of Ituræa and the region of Trachonitis, Josephus says he was tetrarch of Batanæa, Trachonitis, and Auranitis, and a certain portion of the "house of Zenodorus." Luke mentions Ituræa but not Auranitis, and Josephus mentions Auranitis but not Ituræa, and it is therefore concluded that the two are the same. This argument has no weight whatever.[3]

From the several passages above quoted and referred to the general position of Ituræa can be pretty accurately defined. It lay between Hermon and Bashan, and consequently on the south-eastern side of that mountain. In J. de Vitry's 'History of Jerusalem' the position of this province is clearly given as follows:—"After the region of Decapolis, whose borders or extremities are between the sea of Galilee and Sydon, which also extends from the city of Tiberias towards Damascus, is the region of *Ituræa*, that is, this region is beyond the territory of Sydon and the mountains, in a valley called *Bachar*, between us and the Saracens; and as it stretches along the base of Libanus, it is called *Saltus Libani*. This said region of Ituræa adjoins, and is conterminous with, Trachonitis."[4]

[3] Lightfoot, Hor. Heb. s. v. *Ituræa*. In this place may be found an epitome of all the references made to this province in ancient authors. The learning of this author, as evidenced in his many quotations, is generally of far more value than his conclusions.

[4] Jac. de Vitriaco Hist. Hierosol. in Gesta Dei per Francos, p. 1074. William of Tyre also describes the position of this province.—Gesta Dei, p. 771 and 1003.

The name and position of this ancient province correspond exactly with the modern district *Jedûr*, which lies on the west side of the great plain of Damascus. It is bounded on the east by the Hâj road, which separates it from the plain that runs along the west side of the Lejah. On the south it has Jaulân. The mountain-range of Jebel esh-Sheikh forms its north-western border; and on the north lies Wady el-'Ajam. The whole region is a table-land, with a gently undulating surface, here and there diversified with conical tells. In a list which I possess of its towns and villages are thirty-eight names, twenty-nine of which have still a few inhabitants. Most of the ruins resemble those in the Haurân.[5]

[5] The province of Jedûr has never yet been explored, and it possesses so few objects of interest that few travellers would wish to spend time in it. The only ancient site hitherto identified within its borders is Sunamein on the Hâj route. An inscription was discovered there a few years ago, proving it to be the *Aere* of the Itinerary of Antonine.

CHAPTER XVI.

TOUR IN LEBANON, INCLUDING A VISIT TO THE CEDARS AND BA'ALBEK.

Ride from Bludân to Zahleh — Character of the Christians of Zahleh — Route over Lebanon — Wild scenery and singular caverns of Wady Tarshîsh — The residence of the mountain princes — Beyrout — The ancient roads and sculptures of the Nahr el-Kelb — The valley of the Nahr el-Kelb — Its sources visited — The great natural bridge — The Temple of Venus at *Apheca* — Source of the river *Adonis* — Adventure with the Metâwely — Distant view of the cedars — Scenery of Wady Kadîsha — The *Cedars* — View from the summit of Lebanon — Topography of the eastern slopes — Bâ'albek — Ride along the Roman road to Bludân.

July 29th, 1853.—I LEFT my summer residence at Bludân at 5·10 A.M. with the intention of proceeding direct to Beyrout, where business called me, and then returning by way of the cedars and Bâ'albek. I did not wish to follow the ordinary road, which has been often travelled, and has little of interest to divert the attention of the wayfarer; I consequently chose a route equally short with the other, and much more picturesque. I was accompanied as far as Beyrout by two young friends, besides my servant and muleteers.

We rode down the ordinary Bâ'albek road, along the base of the lofty cliffs that overhang the little wady of Zebdâny, and in 40 minutes crossed the rivulet which springs up at 'Ain Hauwar, half an hour on the right, and, flowing down the valley, waters Zebdâny and its lovely plain. We continued in the same northern course, ascend-

ing diagonally the bleak mountain-side that shuts in the vale on the west. A fine stream descending from these hills murmured along over its stony bed in a little ravine on our right; it joins the former stream a few yards above the spot where we crossed it. The view on our right, as we approached the summit of the ridge, was very grand. The sun was appearing over the lofty peaks beyond the plain of Surghâya, and their rocky, jagged summits, scantily clothed with the juniper, stood out in dark bold relief from the brilliant background, while the bright beams, like floods of light, poured through the wild ravines between. The whole, however, has a sad appearance of desolation, for, though the slopes are in part cultivated, the total absence of verdure at this season, and the want of trees on the low grounds, render the prospect bleak and dreary.

At 6·35 we reached the summit, and immediately descended into a deep and picturesque valley, whose sides are clothed with the dwarf oak. It runs for a short distance north-east, in the line of the ridge, and then turning due north falls into Wady Yahfûfeh, at the distance of about a mile and a half. The head of it on our left was like a basin. Crossing it, and skirting a lofty wooded ridge beyond, we turned sharply to the left at 7·15, and entered a fine wady with gently-sloping sides thickly covered with oak and coppice. As we descended we turned again more to the northward, and the scenery became wilder and grander. The bare limestone cliffs here tower overhead, leaving between them but a narrow rugged track for a winter-torrent and summer-path. At 8·30 we entered the Bukâa. There is at this place a wide

break in the line of low hills that runs along the base of the main chain, and the interval is rough, stony ground, intersected with ravines. Half a mile on our right was the village of Mâsy, and the river Yahfûfeh bursts forth from its sublime glen into the plain a short distance beyond. On the slope on our left stands Deir el-Ghuzâl, containing, as I afterwards found, the ruins of a temple. In 35 minutes more we reached the little village of Reyâk, near the banks of the river, and then saw, a few minutes to the eastward, another village called 'Aly en-Nahry; both these stand on the left bank of the Yahfûfeh, and are encompassed by fertile fields and verdant meadows.

Our course was now straight across the plain to Kerak, which we reached at 10·50, having crossed the river about half an hour previously. This village is celebrated as containing the traditional tomb of the patriarch Noah, measuring some seventy yards in length! Five minutes afterwards we entered the large village of Muâllakah, finely situated at the entrance of a sublime glen. Passing through its crowded and bustling streets, we crossed the river Berdûny, and turned up along its right bank; in 20 minutes more we reached Zahleh. We were immediately conducted to the house of an Arab lady who keeps a kind of hotel, and we found there a clean and comfortable apartment, possessing the rare luxuries of chairs and a table, in addition to the eternal divan.

Zahleh is one of the largest and finest villages in Lebanon. It is said to contain, with its suburb Muâllakah, about 10,000 inhabitants, and it is the principal market for the whole surrounding country. As we approached it from the Bukâà we had admired the rich vineyards that

surround it, clothing the whole slopes of the mountains, and the wild glens that furrow their sides; and now, in riding through them, we were astonished at their great fruitfulness. The plain below is rich and abundantly watered. The people are not deserving of such a splendid country, for they are justly celebrated for their pride and their insolence. They are as ignorant a set of priest-ridden bigots as ever polluted a country, and no stranger can pass through their streets without meeting insult, and often abuse. The whole place is now swarming with monks and friars of every colour, and it is literally crowded with churches, convents, and ecclesiastical establishments. The Jesuits are building immense structures, and the whole people are ruled by the priesthood. Of the nature and effects of their government I could relate many a strange and thrilling tale, which would prove to the world that, where the Christians possess power in this land, they are as tyrannical, as unjust, and almost as bloodthirsty, as the haughty Muslems.

We mounted again at 1·40, and proceeded up the steep mountain-side, along the right bank of the wild ravine. The view from this place is truly sublime. From a commanding peak, 40 minutes above the village, I took some important bearings to connect this side of the plain with several points in Antilibanus. Here a spur, like a side ridge, projects considerably into the Bukâ'a from Sunnîn, and is partly separated from the main chain by a rugged wady running parallel to the mountains. We soon afterwards crossed this wady, and stopped for ten minutes at a khan on its western bank. Starting again, and toiling up the steep and rough zigzag path, we reached the summit at 3·40, which is the watershed between the Bukâ'a and

the Mediterranean. The scene which now burst suddenly upon our view was one of unusual grandeur. On our left rose up the lofty summit of Jebel Kuneiyîseh, and on our right the snow-capped Sunnîn rose higher still. Before us was a glen, wide, deep, and wild, running away westward, between beetling cliffs and rugged peaks, like a gash in the mountain-side, until it opened up a view of the far-distant sea. Near us were huge rounded masses of dark-red sandstone, while the sharp peaks of the white limestone here and there towered over them—the two strata seemed struggling for the mastery. From the porous sandstone fountains gush forth at intervals, encompassed by thick shrubberies of the rhododendron, intermixed with the bracken.

The head of this glen, called Wady Tarshîsh, was upon our right, extending up toward Sunnîn, and we consequently turned more to the northward and wound round it by a steep, and in some places even dangerous path. We then turned down along its right bank, following the indented line of the steep ridge. At 3·40 we reached a ravine like a great fissure in the rock, and having heard of a celebrated cave here situated, called Hûwet Tarshîsh, we dismounted to examine it. After clambering down the precipice, we came to the entrance of a cavern, not of great depth, but apparently running far into the mountain-side. From this we crept through a natural tunnel in the rock, and found another cave of great depth and extent. It was impossible to enter, as the sides are smooth and perpendicular, but we threw down large stones, and heard them bounding from ledge to ledge, until at last, in the far distance, they plunged into water

with a sullen noise like the roar of thunder. Passing round the side of this fearful pit, we reached another fissure in the lofty precipice, and saw before us a little glen of singular wildness and beauty. It is encompassed by lofty walls of naked rock, the strata of which are horizontal, and resemble the layers of stones in some Cyclopean structure. The different strata being of different degrees of hardness, regular mouldings and string-courses, like those of Gothic architecture, run round the sides. The whole floor was covered with the rich green foliage of the tobacco-plant.

We resumed our journey at five o'clock, and after an hour and a quarter's ride along the brow of the wild Wady Tarshîsh we reached a little house called Dukkân Merj el-Hauwar, tenanted by a solitary old man, who gains a scanty livelihood by selling a few simple necessaries to travellers and muleteers. Here we encamped for the night. It was a wild and solitary spot, far removed from human habitation. In the gloom of night the mountains around seemed loftier and the glens more profound, while the rocks and precipices rose up on each side in dark and threatening masses.

July 30th.—At half-past five we were again in the saddle, and all trace of our encampment had gone, save the trampled turf where the horses had been picketed, and the smoking ashes on the rude hearth. We rode over a rocky eminence, and descended by a winding path among huge limestone crags to the little hamlet of Merûj. The name is descriptive of the locality, for the limestone here gives way to the sandstone, and green meadows surround the village, shaded by noble oaks and tall pine-trees with

their umbrella-like tops. It stands on the summit of a ridge whose sides slope down on the right and left, almost precipitously, into romantic glens. That on the north is Wady Biskinta, containing a tributary of the Nahr el-Kelb, and the other is Wady Tarshîsh, still running on in its course to the river of Beyrout. Continuing along the summit of the ridge, we came at seven o'clock to the head of a ravine descending on the right to the glen below. On its left side, clinging to the steep bank, was the village of Shuweir, far below our path, while over it, on the very brow of a projecting cliff, stands the fine convent of St. Elias. For half an hour more we followed the same path through forests of pines, and then reached a spot where the road branches—one path turning southward along the summit of the ridge, which here also branches, and leading to Brummana, Beit Miry, and Deir el-Kulâh—all of which were in view: the other branch turns to the right and descends the slope diagonally to Bukfeiya. From this point we commanded a glorious view of the Wady Salîma, the continuation of Wady Tarshîsh, and part of the Metn beyond it. Almost the whole of this region is thickly wooded, the lofty sandstone ridges with the pine, and the limestone peaks with the oak and wild pear, while the terraced slopes and profound glens below are clothed with the mulberry and the vine. On the opposite side of the wady the village Salîma stands on the rugged slope, and in its centre rise up the grey walls of the large ruinous palace, once the residence of the mountain princes.

We turned to the right, and after descending for 35 minutes along a road like a winding staircase in ruins we

reached Bukfeiya. This is one of the most picturesque villages in Lebanus. The houses are not huddled together like those of Antilibanus or the plains, but are scattered about with pleasing irregularity amid gardens of mulberry-trees and blooming orchards. Lofty frowning cliffs, to whose rugged sides the dwarf oak clings, shoot up behind it, and, below, the mountain-side descends, now in terraced slopes covered with the richest foliage, and now in sheer precipices of naked rock, to the profound glen of the Nahr el-Kelb. As we rode through the village the palace of the Emîr Hyder, the present ruler of Lebanon, was on our right, surrounded by well-kept gardens, while the light verandahs of the house of his secretary rose over the plantations on our left. The view to the north and west is almost inconceivably grand. There is the wild ravine of the ancient Lycus, shut in by frowning cliffs, and the varied hills and peaks above are crowned with castle-like convents, and their sides dotted with picturesque villages. Away below, the ravine opens between naked white precipices on the Mediterranean, and the coast-line, with its bold promontories and graceful-curving bays, extends northward far as the eye can see; while on the south it is shut in, at the distance of a few miles, by the long, low neck of land on which stand the white buildings of Beyrout, contrasting well with the deep-blue sea in front, and the rich foliage of the orchards behind.

We sat long, gazing on this gorgeous scene, beneath the spreading boughs of a giant oak-tree. Vines laden with their tempting fruit hung in festoons overhead, and fig-trees covered the terraces around. Breakfast was spread on the rock beside us, and what with the morning

ride, and mountain air, and glorious scenery, we all felt inclined to linger over the viands. Nearly a year afterwards I spent a day on this spot in company of three English friends; and though some of them had wandered over most of Europe, they confessed that they had seldom seen such a glorious panorama.

After an hour's rest we again mounted, and rode down the steep mountain-side. The road, bad enough above, here became much worse. It seemed as if some malicious individual had made a successful attempt to render a very bad road altogether impassable. Nature had strewn over it large blocks of limestone, and time had smoothed their surfaces and sharpened their spike-like projections; intervals of comparatively level ground had been left between them, where animals could have got tolerable footing, but these had been carefully filled with sharp fragments of stone, set upon their edges, between which our poor horses sought in vain for a spot on which to plant their feet. They slipped and staggered, and often writhed in pain when a foot got twisted or wedged between the stones. Time and patience, however, overcame all difficulties; and after a painful march of two hours and a half, we reached the smooth beach, beside the fine stream of Antelîyas. It was now near two years since I had been refreshed by the sight of the rolling waves and dashing surf; and my heart warmed at the prospect before me. Thoughts of early days swelled upon my memory, when my home was by the sea in a far distant land, and when the hoarse voice of the storm-tossed billows used to lull me to slumber in the long winter nights. In two hours more we rode into Beyrout.

August 2nd.—At half-past six o'clock I passed through the old gateway of Beyrout, glad to escape from the intense heat. I again followed the road over the Roman bridge, and along the fine bay of St. George, and forded the river Antelîyas where its waters touch the waves of the broad sea. In forty minutes more I passed the half-ruined khan at the end of the sandy beach, and twenty-five minutes afterwards dismounted on the banks of the Nahr el-Kelb.

The road before reaching the mouth of this classic stream is carried round the side of a rugged and almost perpendicular cliff, against the base of which the waves are lashed into showers of diamond spray. The rock has been levelled, and in many places deeply excavated, to afford a passage. On the highest part lies a Roman milestone with an imperfect inscription; and on the side of a deep cutting on the bank of the river there is another inscription on a tablet, showing that the road was repaired in the days of the Emperor M. Aurelius Antoninus.[1] But higher up on the cliff are traces of a far more ancient and interesting roadway, on the side of which are time-worn bas-reliefs showing the work of Assyrian and Egyptian sovereigns. I spent some time in a close examination of these singular monuments. I had visited them once before, and I have visited them since that time,

[1] It is worthy of remark how closely this inscription resembles that at the gorge of the Barada, near the ruins of Abila. It was in the time of the same emperor, and probably under the inspection of the same legate, that both the roads were constructed. Some excellent remarks on these inscriptions may be seen in a paper read before the Royal Geographical Society by John Hogg, Esq. I feel greatly indebted to Mr. Hogg, who kindly forwarded a copy of it to me at Damascus.

but I will not here trouble my reader with any historical disquisition or antiquarian argument. I leave that to others who are more deeply versed in the mysteries of hieroglyphics and cuneiform characters.[2]

On returning to the river I found breakfast laid beneath the shade of the lofty bridge. It was a lonely spot. The precipices rose up like walls on each side, shutting in the narrow vale with its fringe of trees, and green turf, and murmuring river hurrying on to join the waters of the great sea. Above the bridge the ravine becomes narrower and wilder. Some dwarf oaks, shrubs, and creeping plants cling to the rocky banks, and add softness and beauty to the grandeur of the features. An ancient aqueduct, in part excavated in the rock, but mostly supported on lofty arches of fine masonry, winds along the right bank; and long stalactites hang from its arches and from the projecting ledges below.

At 11·15 I was again in the saddle. While considering about the road I should follow, a portly monk, the superior of a neighbouring convent, rode up to us, and gave us all requisite information. The worthy friar had quite a jolly good-humoured look; and when he proposed to me to remain where I was till the evening, and then he would join me and be my companion all the way to the Cedars, I felt half inclined to consent. But the loss of a day was too much to give even for the pleasure of such society. The ecclesiastics here have quite a different appearance from those in other parts of the country. They are men

[2] A full summary of all that has been said and written on these bas-reliefs and their inscriptions may be seen in Ritter's 'Palästina und Syrien,' iv. 531-46.

apparently conscious of possessing not only freedom but power. The subdued and cringing mien they have or assume in other districts, where Islâm is predominant, is not seen in Lebanon. Secure in their mountain home, and in the obedience, if not in the love, of their people, they fear no foe, and bow to no superior. It is a pity, however, that arrogance and assumption should assume the place of fawning humility. These are the invariable results of power when combined with ignorance. The priesthood of Lebanon, as a class, are ignorant, bigoted, and overbearing. They consider their whole duties to consist in keeping up the wealth and state of their innumerable convents and churches, and going through the senseless mummery of their multitudinous services. The education of the people they never think of; and the idea of imparting religious instruction is wholly out of the question. It is true a few schools have been established, but these are got up by the people. The protestant missionaries have done more for the advancement of education within the short period of twenty years than the combined priesthood of all Lebanon and all Syria has done during centuries.

I followed the right bank of the river for ten minutes to a little mill, and then struck up the side of the wady by a difficult zigzag path. On gaining the summit our way led through terraced vineyards and groves of fig-trees and mulberries. At twelve o'clock we passed the little village of Zûk, and then turned to the right toward the brow of the ravine, as we wished to descend to Jâîta, and visit the large cave beside it, from which the whole waters of the Nahr el-Kelb now burst forth. In winter other torrents

run down from lofty mountains above, and swell the stream into a foaming river; but in summer the waters are exhausted in the irrigation of gardens and fields farther up the glen. We missed the path, however, and ascended a conical peak crowned by the convent of St. Elias. I only discovered the mistake after I had scaled the steep hill, and when from beneath the convent walls I saw Jaîta a thousand feet below me in the bottom of a deep ravine. The splendour of the prospect in some measure made up for my disappointment. I had a bird's-eye view of the sublime glen which seemed to open the mountain to its very centre. Its sides are in many places naked cliffs several hundred feet high, while over these are the terraced acclivities like broad stairs reaching to the summits of the hills around.

I now rode along a narrow sandstone ridge, with the fine village of Antûrah in a vale on my left. The slopes on each side are thickly clothed with forests of noble pines. Passing the sandstone strata I ascended a steep and rugged slope strewn with vast blocks of limestone, with here and there little fields and vineyards. At 2·40 I reached Ajiltûn. A guide now became absolutely necessary. Narrow mountain-paths intersect each other in every direction; and though the general line of route may be clear enough, yet the wild ravines and projecting cliffs that run across the line make it extremely difficult even for a native to follow the road. A guide being procured, we mounted again at three o'clock.

The scenery of the country between Ajiltûn and Meirûba is the grandest and most remarkable I have ever seen. Innumerable little ravines run down into the deep glen;

and their sides, with nearly the entire ridges between them, are thickly covered with lofty peaks of naked white limestone, which sometimes rise up in solitary grandeur, but are generally grouped together and united by narrow veins, like arched viaducts. These cliffs assume various fantastic forms. In one place the horizontal strata are worn away at the edges, and the lofty solitary rock resembles a huge pile of cushions. In other places there is a long stalk with a broad top like a table. One of this form I noticed near the village of Feitirûn, and I estimated its height at nearly fifty feet. In many places the cliffs are ribbed like the pipes of an organ, or piles of columnar basalt. A single rod of clear soil can scarcely be found in the whole region; but every minute patch is carefully cultivated. In more than one place have I seen the stubble, where the wheat had grown, in grottoes, and under natural viaducts.

It was through this wild region that the soldiers of Ibrahîm Pasha were forced to retreat from the coast in 1841. The warlike mountaineers, supplied with arms by the English fleets, grievously harassed them, and shot hundreds from behind rocks. A perusal of the histories of Napier and Hunter had made me familiar with these scenes of blood; and the graphic sketches I had often heard from Mr. Wood in Damascus excited in me a more lively interest. Mr. Wood bore a conspicuous part in those stirring scenes, and contributed much, by his intimate knowledge of the country and the people, to the success of the various enterprises.

After a long and fatiguing ride of three hours forty-

five minutes I reached Meirûba, and encampéd for the night at a fountain above the village.

August 3rd.—A cold wind blew round my tent this morning, and compelled me to have recourse to an extra coat. What a change from Beyrout! I felt as if new life had already been infused into me; and yet as the chill morning blast swept past I almost wished the sun had surmounted the lofty Sunnîn. Meirûba is finely situated on the right bank of the wady Salîb, which has here sloping terraced sides, thickly covered with mulberry groves; while a short distance farther down, the opposite cliffs approach so close together as scarcely to afford a passage for the foaming torrent that leaps from rock to rock. This stream is the highest tributary of the Nahr el-Kelb.

Having sent the muleteers and luggage by the straight road to Afka, I set out at 7·5, accompanied only by my servant, to visit the places of interest around the sources of the ancient Lycus. Our way was along the right bank of Wady Salîb, a few hundréd feet above the bed of the stream. On our left rose lofty bold precipices, over which towered the highest peaks of Lebanon. On the opposite side of the glen is a high rocky ridge thinly covered with oaks. At 7·50 I reached the small village of Harajîyah, and beside it I observed the largest walnut-tree I had ever seen. In forty minutes more we passed through Fereiya, situated in the head of the valley, where several streams meet, after descending the steep declivities of the mountains above. We here turned round sharply to the right, and ascended the opposite ridge diagonally, following no

regular path, but winding up the rugged slope among loose stones and huge masses of limestone. In twenty minutes we reached the summit beside the ruins called Kul'aat Fakra. This is a simple square tower of Roman origin, with massive walls, and a few confined apartments. Over the doorway is an inscription, but so much broken and defaced that I was not able to copy it. On the same side of the building, near the angle, is another inscription, as follows :—

ΛΕΝΤΕΠΙΘΟΛΩΝ
ΡΑΒΒΟΜΟΥΕΠΙΜΕ
ΛΗΤΟΥΕΚΤΩΝΤΟΥ
ΜΕΓΙΣΤΟΥΘΕΟΥΩΚΟ
ΔΟ
ΜΗΘΗ

This shows that the building was founded in the year 355, A.D. 43, which was the third year of the reign of the Emperor Claudius. It appears that Richter made out so much of the inscription above the door as to ascertain the name of this emperor.[3]

Five minutes south of this building, down the rocky slope, is another and much more extensive ruin. Here are the traces of a temple with a portico of massive columns, and a large enclosed area in front. The walls are of great thickness, and constructed of large squared blocks, and the columns are four feet in diameter. Near this are the ruins of a bath, fragments of the marble pavement of which, I was informed, still exist beneath the rubbish. In the rocks around are some excavated tombs, and there are likewise the foundations of several other buildings.

[3] See Ritter, Pal. und Syr. iv. 514.

This place, though far removed from human habitation, was now alive with groups of men and women; children, too, played around the bases of wild cliffs, and scampered along the miniature meadows that line a little stream. It was the harvest season, and the villagers had for the time deserted their houses to bivouac on the thrashing-floors. Gaily-dressed sheikhs were dashing about from field to field on their fine mares, while the more aged perched on a stone or a rocky ledge, with umbrellas to protect them from the sun's rays. It is the universal custom in Lebanon for a large portion of the inhabitants to spend some weeks on the thrashing-floors during the harvest. In the more exposed districts this is impossible, and there the grain is conveyed to the village as soon as it is reaped. This scene brought vividly before me the simple Bible narrative of Boaz and Ruth;[4] and it showed also how little change the lapse of near three thousand years has effected in the habits of the people of this land.

Before leaving Meirûba I had heard that the Metâwely had been lately committing some depredations in the surrounding country, and that the chief sheikh of the district had assembled about three hundred men to demand restitution and to punish the offenders. I was cautioned against travelling alone in these wild regions, but I well knew that, so long as I kept within the Christian territory, I was safe, and I also thought the Metâwely would not venture any open violence to a Frank. I here learned that the rumours were in part true, and that the road to Afka was not altogether safe. However, it was too late to tell me that now,

[4] Ruth, ch. iii.

as my muleteers had in all probability already reached that place.

Half an hour's ride from these strange ruins, up the steep mountain-side in a north-easterly direction, brought us to the great natural bridge, called by the people *Jisr el-Hajr*, "The Bridge of Stone." It is situated about half an hour above the village of Fareiya, towards the summit of Sunnîn. It spans a frightful chasm, like a fissure in the mountain-side. The best view of it is gained by descending to the bottom and passing underneath. The arch then appears perfectly regular, and the abutments well formed. It is oblique, and has a span of over 150 feet, and an elevation of nearly 100. While I was surprised at the colossal proportions of this fine bridge, I felt greatly disappointed in the character of the scenery around. It wants features. There are long, steep, naked slopes, and lofty rounded summits; but the frowning cliff and wood-clad peak are wanting. The mountains are grand, but it is the grandeur of magnitude only.

We now turned northward, sweeping along the shelving mountain-side round the head of the glen, and in twenty-five minutes passed the fine fountain called *Neb'a el-'Asil.* This and *Neb'a el-Leben*, the stream from which passes under the natural bridge, form the highest and principal sources of the Nahr el-Kelb. From this place the road winds along the brow of a fearful precipice, running almost parallel to the route I had travelled in the morning. In an hour we turned to the right up a little glen, and reached Nebà el-Kanà at one o'clock. Here I stopped half an hour for lunch. The nearest road from Nebà el-Asil to Afka strikes over a lofty ridge considerably to the right of our path.

On leaving this little fountain at 1·30, we ascended a steep hill by a very difficult path, and on gaining the summit kept straight on over the ridge, instead of turning to the right, and thus missed the path. I was well repaid, however, for a short détour, by the scene of wild grandeur that opened up before me on reaching the northern brow. I here stood on the summit of a ridge whose side sunk down at my feet in a series of gigantic natural terraces, faced with rugged cliffs, to the brow of the Wady Ibrahîm; and there a sheer precipice of naked rock formed the side of a ravine that seemed to open the vast mountain to its base. On the opposite side rose a similar but still loftier precipice, over which towered, almost perpendicularly, a mountain peak, its sides partially clothed with the dark foliage of the dwarf oak. Tall needle-like rocks of white limestone shoot up here and there from its sides and summit, giving it an alpine wildness and grandeur. A fleecy cloud of milky whiteness hovered round it, bringing out in bolder relief the jagged top, and rendering still more gloomy, by the contrast, the profound glen beneath. The whole was more like a scene from 'Manfred' than a living reality.

A wild Bedawy, who appeared mysteriously from among the rocks, guided us to the lost road. After passing through the little encampment of his tribe, we reached the fine spring of Nebà el-Hadîd at 2·15. Having drunk of its ice-cold waters, we continued our course along the shelving mountain-side—the sublime glen of the Nahr Ibrahîm, the ancient *Adonis*, far below on our left, and the loftiest summits of Lebanon rising up on our right. The path was in most places a mere goat-track, and the stones

loosened by the horses' feet rolled and leaped down the declivity till lost in the far distance. In a little over an hour from Neba el-Hadîd we reached the brow of a long descent, passing down which we arrived at Afka at 4·15. The muleteers were waiting beneath the ruins of the old temple. The tent was soon pitched in the ravine below, overshadowed by the fragrant foliage of a large walnut. Beside it the foaming torrent leaped from rock to rock, diffusing an agreeable coolness and freshness through the air, notwithstanding the bright beams of the evening sun.

This is a spot of singular wildness and beauty. A semi-circular wall of naked rock, nearly a thousand feet high, shuts in the deep glen on the east. From a dark cave at its foot bursts forth a noble stream, which almost immediately falls in sheets of foam over several legdes of rock, and then rushes like a maniac through confused heaps of huge boulders to the profound and unseen depths below. Groves of pine and oak trees, intermixed with the waluut and the mulberry, overshadow the boiling waters and clothe the rugged banks of the ravine. On a little mound beside the waterfall once stood the Temple of Venus, now a confused mass of ruins. Hewn stones and shattered columns cover its summit and sides, while many others have rolled down to the bed of the river, and are washed by its waters. This is the fountain of the river *Adonis*.

There can be no doubt that this is the *Apheca*, celebrated in ancient times for its Temple of Venus, where the fairest daughters of Syria assembled to pay their vows to the Goddess of Love. It is also the scene of the romantic tale of Venus and Adonis; and the river was in former

days believed to be reddened at certain seasons by the blood of the shepherd hunter who was killed on its banks.[5]

The little village of Afka stands a few hundred yards from the fountain, on the side of the ravine. Its inhabitants, who are all Metâwely, have a bad name, and the appearance and manners of such as I saw tended to corroborate the common rumours. They present a marked contrast in their spare figures, restless fierce eyes, and abrupt address, to the staid dignity and noble bearing of their Christian neighhours. They are idle and unsettled in their habits, and are noted thieves. While standing on a rock in the midst of the stream, searching for inscriptions among the prostrate ruins of the temple, a wild shout behind me caused me to start round, and there I saw one of the worst specimens of these men perched on a fragment of rock a few yards distant. His principal articles of dress were a flaming turban, a broad leather belt stuck full of cartridges, a huge knife, an old pistol, and a gun of formidable length. I unconsciously looked round to see if any of my attendants were in sight, but there were none, and the spot was lonely enough. A moment's reflection, however, made me smile at fancied danger, and, jumping to his side, I demanded his business. He held out an old Roman copper coin, and asked me to buy it. I did so, and took him to the tent to obtain payment. Here the conversation and inquiries of my friend created some distrust. He said he had a few old gold coins, and wished to know if I would buy them. He also asked whether we would remain there alone at night, and if I had arms

[5] See Ritter, Pal. und Syr. iv. 558-61.

with me. The muleteers, on returning from the village, whither they had gone to obtain barley and other necessaries, were greatly alarmed. The people there had tried to bribe them to assist in plundering me; and now they urged me to leave the place, and go on to some other village. This proposal I would not listen to, and I laughed at their fears. I thought it right, however, to take every precaution to prevent any attempt at pilfering or carrying off our animals.

August 4th.—At 6·5 we resumed our journey, first climbing up the side of the ravine, and then skirting a projecting spur of the lofty mountain-range on our right. Our course was the same as on the preceding day, and the scenery similar in character. At 7·30 we crossed a little natural bridge at the foot of a fearful precipice, and a few minutes afterwards passed a ravine coming down from the mountains on the right. Through this there are some traces of an ancient road; and a short time previous Mr. Barnett had discovered here the fragment of an inscription containing the name of Diocletian, and also some tablets with partially-defaced cuneiform characters. These I did not then know of, and did not see them. This road probably led from Bâ'albek to the coast. In ten minutes more we entered the village of Akûrah.

After half an hour's delay for breakfast I rode on through a bleak uninteresting region, close to the base of the loftiest ridge of Libanus. For five long hours my path traversed lofty ridges, deep valleys, and long shelving mountain-sides; and then suddenly I found myself on the brow of the magnificent glen of the Kadîsha. It had been my intention only to go as far as Hadeth to-day, but I

found this village far out of the direct route to the cedars, and I was besides assured that I could reach the cedars from where I stood in three hours. I therefore resolved to change my plan, and proceed direct. I paid a shepherd to remain here and tell the muleteers to follow us, and then turned down the declivity to Hasrûn. After a fearful descent of an hour and a quarter, we reached this beautiful village. It is situated on the left bank of the Kadîsha, many hundreds of feet above the bed of the river, which here runs in a narrow *crevasse* between perpendicular cliffs. Above these the terraced gardens and orchards commence, and run far up the steep mountain-sides. Farther to the eastward the ravine expands, and there stands the large village of Bsherreh, about an hour distant.

I was equally struck with the richness of the gardens around Hasrûn, and the beauty and grace of the numerous women and girls that wandered about among them. I asked for some apples at one orchard; they were all done, but a little girl ran forward with a basket of delicious pears. She was one of the prettiest creatures I had seen in Syria. Her complexion was fair as that of any daughter of England, and her rich auburn hair hung in graceful curls over her neck and shoulders. The boys and men, too, are more like Europeans than Syrians. They have high foreheads, aquiline noses, and bright blue eyes. I no doubt saw them to advantage, as the whole village were in holiday attire. The great feast of the cedars was approaching, and many of the people, with crowds of strangers, were preparing to go there on the following day. I found among them a worthy Italian monk who spoke French. He wished me to join his party,

which, he said, would start in a few minutes. I pleaded haste and hurried on, but was afterwards sorry for it, as he reached his destination long before me.

I rode on through shady lanes to the straggling village of Bez'ûn, where I stopped half an hour to get my servant's horse shod and obtain some provisions, and then set out for the cedars. Unfortunately, following the advice of the farrier, we took what he assured us was a better road than the ordinary one. This led us far away up the mountain-side to the right, and then along the shelving declivity near the summit. The little group of the cedars was constantly in view, but deep ravines yawned between us. After two hours' wandering we met a man who informed us we were on the straight road to Bâalbek! He soon brought us back to the right path, but it was seven o'clock ere we reached our destination. I had been more than twelve hours in the saddle and felt almost exhausted. The muleteers had not yet arrived, and I feared lest they too had wandered. I sat down beneath the wide-spreading branches of one of those gigantic trees, expecting to be obliged to pass a dinnerless and houseless night; and this was not the worst, for crowds of drunken men and women were wandering about, quarrelling with each other, and firing off guns and pistols, without much regard to the safety of their neighbours. Thus do they celebrate the feast of the cedars! About nine o'clock the muleteers arrived, and after a hearty dinner I threw myself on my humble bed. I was soon asleep, and, notwithstanding the noisy piety of those around, the light of morn was stealing over the lofty mountain-tops ere I awoke.

August 5th.—On first viewing the cedars from the

heights above Hasrûn, I experienced feelings of disappointment. I had pictured in my mind far different scenery in the district round them. Imagination had painted rugged cliffs, and wild ravines, and these remnants of ancient noble forests clinging to the mountain-side, like pines on an Alpine peak. But here was a vast semicircular bosom in the bare white mountains, whose sides slope down from the rounded summits with uniform regularity, without a crag, or peak, or patch of verdure to relieve the monotony. The mountain-tops were now streaked with snow, but even this almost blended with the white limestone, and gave little variety to the scene. In the very centre of this vast bosom I saw a solitary black speck, apparently altogether out of place—it was the grove of the cedars. On approaching the brow of the hill, where my eye took in the sublime glen of the Kadîsha, with its terraced banks, and numerous villages peeping out from dark masses of foliage, the view was finer and more varied; but still a long naked slope separated the cedars from the grandeur of the glen below.

It was not till I had entered the precincts of the sacred grove that feelings of disappointment vanished. Then the beautiful fan-like branches of the younger trees, the gracefulness of their pyramidical forms, and, above all, the huge trunks of the patriarchs themselves, which one must walk round to form a true conception of their vast proportions, excited feelings of unmingled admiration. And when all the associations of their high antiquity, ancient glory, and sacred interest swelled upon my memory, the wondrous attraction that had for centuries drawn crowds of pilgrims to this lonely spot, from the ends of

the earth, became at once manifest. The pine-groves of the Metn are far more picturesque, and the oak-forests of Hermon and Bashan far more extensive and beautiful; but cedar-beams were laid in the Lord's house at Jerusalem, and cedar-forests were the glory of Lebanon, as Lebanon was the glory of the land of Israel.

Only a few, perhaps a dozen, very ancient trees now remain. There are, however, many others of very respectable dimensions and antiquity, some of which are four or five feet in diameter. The whole grove is compact, the trees growing close together on the summit and sides of a little limestone knoll. In the centre a small rude chapel has been constructed within the last few years, the roof of which is wholly of cedar-wood. In a chamber attached to it resides the deacon, who is the recognised guardian of the place, and expects from all travellers some little present in exchange for a few cones, or a fragment of a branch which the winter's snow may have broken down. I was present during the celebration of morning-mass by two stranger bishops who had just arrived. During the performance the deacon brought me the travellers' book, with a pencil from off the altar! He requested me to write my name in it. This is certainly a more rational mode of recording a visit than the sacrilegious practice of carving the letters on the bark of some noble tree. In fact, the trunks of *all* the most ancient trees, with one exception, are now all hacked, hewn, and disfigured by this barbarous propensity of travellers. *There* may be read by the curious, names of illustrious savans, joined with elsewhere unheard-of individuals. Noble lords, too, figure beside the autographs of their

dragomen; and other associations, equally ennobling, are formed to excite the amusement and indignation of posterity.

I now bade adieu to the cedars without either a hope or a desire of ever seeing them again; and as I toiled up the steep ascent I met crowds of men and women flocking to the feast. An hour and a half brought me to the summit of the mountain. The panorama that was here spread out around me was of vast extent and great variety and beauty. From a height of full ten thousand feet I looked down on many a peak, and glen, and terraced slope along the western side of the great mountain-chain, until my eye rested on the vast expanse of the Mediterranean, extending out from its base to the far-distant horizon. Toward the south-west ran the mountain-ridge, peak after peak, until shut in by the snow-capped Sunnîn. On the north-east rose up at my side the loftiest summits in Syria. Turning eastward, at my feet was the Bukâa, smooth as a lake, dotted with villages, and beyond it the long chain of Antilibanus, bounded on the far south by the graceful cone-shaped Hermon.

From this commanding position I took some important bearings, which have served, in connection with others, greatly to change the relative positions of some of the most noted places in this section of the map. I need not here insert them, as they have been carefully used in the construction of the map attached to this work.

A fearful descent of an hour and a half brought me to 'Ain 'Ata, a fine fountain of ice-cold water. The main ridge of Libanus was now crossed, but a side ridge of low altitude, covered with forests of oak and wild pear-trees,

was still before me. Pressing onward, over slope and through vale, I reached, in two hours more, the small and wretched village of Deir el-Ahmer, on the side of the Bukâà. I felt inclined to rest for a time beneath the shade of an old ruined church, but the heat, the dust, and the insolence of the people, were too much for endurance. I therefore mounted my horse, and turned his head toward Bâàlbek, and in two hours I once more took my seat beneath the shade of its majestic ruins.

The eastern slopes of the great chain of Libanus have never hitherto been accurately described or delineated upon maps; I shall, therefore, here insert a few remarks upon them, the results of observations made at different times and from different positions. The great central chain, as has been stated already, lies between the cedars and 'Ain 'Ata, and extends in an unbroken line to the north-east and south-west. It is lofty, steep, and grand, but naked, and completely barren. The whole surface is covered with gravel, the débris of the limestone rock of which the range is entirely composed; and this lies loosely on the long smooth slopes and rounded summits. Here and there a solitary oak or blasted pine clings to the mountain-side, but there is no other verdure. The waters of 'Ain 'Ata burst out at the base of this ridge; and beside the fountain a long, deep, straight valley runs parallel to the mountains, extending south-west as far as Sunnîn, and north-east to the "entering in of Hamath." Between this valley and the plain of the Bukâà there is a *side ridge*, almost as broad in some places as the central chain, but much lower than it; its features are, however, entirely different from those of the other. Its sides have

an easy and graceful slope, and are thickly covered with forests of oak, wild plum, hawthorn, and other trees; and long winding valleys furrow its sides. It is lowest and narrowest about half way between 'Ain 'Ata and Sunnîn; and the Bukâ'a at this point attains its greatest breadth. Advancing northward it increases in altitude and width, encroaching on the plain, but not in the least altering the course of the great central chain. Opposite Fîkeh, a small village at the base of Antilibanus, eighteen miles from Bâ'albek, it attains its greatest height, and here the Bukâ'a is narrowest.

I shall not detain my reader among the splendid ruins of Bâ'albek, though they are familiar to me now as the home of my youth. They have already been visited and described by historians, antiquaries, architects, poets, and painters; and I care not for retracing the sketches of others, or analyzing their learned disquisitions. My province is among less known, if less interesting, sites and ruins.

August 6th.—I left the fountain, on whose grassy bank I had encamped, at 5·20. The path I took to Bludân is different from the usual route; but it was new to me, while the other I had traversed before. I wished, too, if possible, to trace the line of the Roman road from this city to Zebdâny, and in this I was successful. My way led near the base of the mountain-range, and after proceeding about three-quarters of an hour I came upon distinct remains of the ancient road. In twenty minutes more I passed a ruined village, with some foundations of large hewn stones, evidently of Roman origin. Another quarter of an hour brought me to a deep ravine, which

runs down on the right to the village of Taiyibeh. I could not see the place where the road crossed this ravine, but soon after passing it I again observed what I considered faint traces of its course. I had travelled so far in a direction nearly south-west, but here I turned south-by-east up the gentle slope, having on my right a dry shallow wady. In half an hour I reached a sublime glen that intersects a great side ridge of Antilibanus. Through this I passed diagonally in the line of the ancient road. The scenery is wild and grand, beetling cliffs towering high overhead, surmounted by graceful wooded hills. The little village of Shâîbeh stands on the declivity half a mile to the left, and behind it rise the rugged sides of the central chain. After ascending the bank of the ravine, and crossing a low narrow ridge, I came to the head of a long winding valley called Wady Mârabûn. On my left was a little knoll crowned by the ruins of an old temple, and at its eastern base is a small fountain. I now rode down this valley, crossing and recrossing the gravelly bed of a stream that flows most of the year. The hills on the right slope gently up, but those on the left have bold features and are deeply furrowed by wild ravines: the whole is thinly covered with the oak and hawthorn. After riding for about two hours down this valley, in a south-westerly direction, I reached a place where it expands into a little plain of verdant meadows and luxuriant cornfields. On a rocky tell on its eastern side stands the half-ruined village of Mârabûn. The mountain on the left rises up nearly three thousand feet almost a sheer precipice, and on its jagged summits are dark forests of juniper.

The wild grandeur of the scenery among these peaks is scarcely exceeded by any part of Libanus.

The ancient road appears to have skirted the northern side of this plain. At the base of the tell on which M'arabûn stands is a large fountain, the principal source of the Nahr Yahfûfeh. A quarter of an hour after passing it I dismounted for breakfast, beneath a giant walnut, close to the massive foundations of a very ancient temple. This building was small, with a portico of heavy columns to the east. Its architecture, so far as it can now be seen, appears to have been simple and chaste.

After an hour's rest I again mounted, and rode twenty minutes farther through rich fields along the left bank of the wady. I then had close on my right a Roman bridge of a single arch spanning the stream. By this the ancient road appears to have crossed from the opposite side of the vale. A few yards below this spot the river enters a wild and picturesque ravine called Wady Yahfûfeh, through which it winds to the Bukâa, five miles distant. The ordinary road to Bâalbek crosses this bridge, and ascends the steep mountain on its northern side by a zigzag path. There is another route down the ravine to near the little village of Yahfûfeh, and then over a difficult rugged pass to Neby Shît, a village so called from the tomb of *Seth*, the son of Adam, which is there shown.

I now turned to the left up a picturesque branch valley containing a fine tributary of the Yahfûfeh. Its banks are lined with corn-fields and fringed with poplars and walnuts. In twenty-eight minutes I reached the large village of Surghâya, which gives its name to the river, the wady,

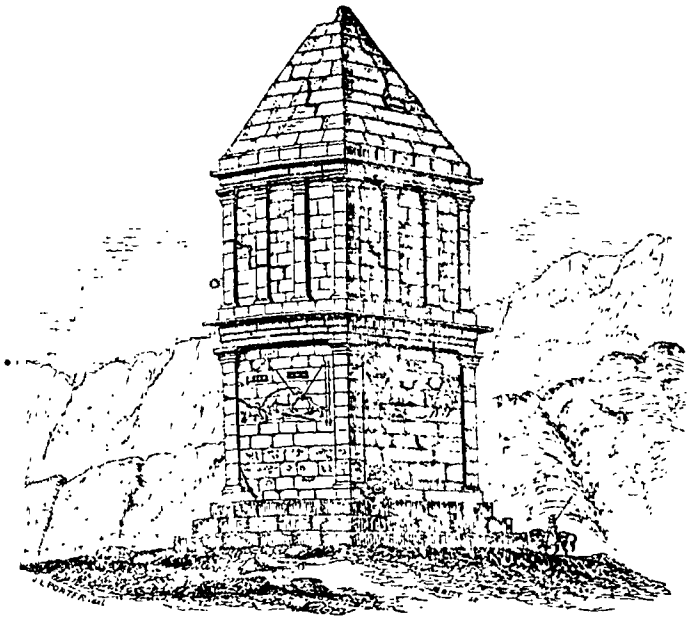
and a fertile plain on the south-west. There is a large fountain, the source of the stream referred to, in the gardens beside the houses. I here entered a plain about a mile in breadth, having on the right a low ridge of hills, and on the left the loftiest peaks of Antilibanus. Along the base of the latter are extensive vineyards. About the centre of this plain is the watershed between the valleys of Yahfûfeh and the Barada, and, consequently, between the Bukâ'a and the eastern plain. In forty-five minutes from Surghâya I had on my left, at the foot of the precipitous mountain-side, the little village of 'Ain Hauwar, with a large fountain, the source, as has been already stated, of the Nahr Zebdâny. In ten minutes more I reached the end of the plain of Surghâya and the head of Wady Zebdâny, and another hour brought me to Bludân.

This region, though traversed during the last century by hundreds of travellers, has never hitherto been correctly described or delineated upon maps. My numerous bearings and minute observations, connected with carefully-kept Itineraries, have enabled me to construct the accompanying map, in the accuracy of which I feel confident. It will be seen by any observant traveller who passes along this route, that the plains of Zebdâny and Surghâya, and the Wady Mârabûn, are all in a direct line, running very nearly from south-west to north-east, *by compass;* yet hitherto the route from the southern end of the plain of Zebdâny, towards Mârabûn, has been represented as running due north! and by some north-by-west![6] It is

[6] Dr. Wilson appears to have travelled the same route between Zebdâny and Bâ'albek as that here described. His notes, however, are full of errors. He does not notice the plain of Surghâya at all,

this strange error which has tended so much to misplace Bâalbek and the whole ridge of Antilibanus on all previous maps.

but says that "the plain soon contracted after we passed Zebedâní." This is true; but it soon expands again. He says that "a few yards *north of Surghâya* the watershed occurs, a stream flowing southward through Wâdí Baradá, and another, called Karaiyah, flowing first northward, and then escaping to the westward." This is wholly incorrect. The watershed is nearly a mile *south* of Surghâya; and there is no stream flowing into the Wady Barada from any place north of 'Ain Hauwar. Wady M'arabûn he calls Wâdí Rummâni. This name I never heard. He took bearings from Khân Bundûk, a little ruin on the eastern side of the plain of Zebdâny, and from the head of Wady M'arabûn, which tend to confirm my previous statement about the direction of this route. Mount Hermon bore from the former place S.W. by S., and from the latter likewise S.W. by S.; and from this it is plain he must have travelled between these two places in a course N.W. by N. He draws the singular conclusion that he must have proceeded *due north* in the interval! It is strange that his cartographer did not observe this blunder. See 'Lands of the Bible,' vol. ii. pp. 375-6.



Monument of Hŭrmŭl.

CHAPTER XVII.

TOUR TO HUMS, AND ROUND THE NORTHERN END OF ANTILIBANUS.

Ride over Antilibanus from Saidnâya to Bâ'albek — Temple at Nahleh — Topography of Antilibanus — The ruins of *Lybon* and source of the *Orontes* — Ancient canals — Convent and ruins at Ras Bâ'albek — Great fountain of the Orontes — Excavated convent of Mâr Marûn — Monument of Hŭrmŭl — Ruins of Jûsy — Not the site of *Laodicia* — Depredations of the Bedawîn — Site and history of RIBLAH — The Orontes — Probable site of *Laodicia ad Libanum* — The lake of Hŭms and its ancient dam — Hŭms, the ancient *Emesa* — Effects of Turkish misrule — Assyrian mounds — History and antiquities of Emesa — Northern termination of Antilibanus — Tragic death of the Aga of Hasya.

NORTHERN BORDER OF THE "LAND OF ISRAEL" — Mount *Hor* — The "Entering in of Ḥamath" — Identification of ZEDAD and HAZAR-ENAN.

Night march and adventures with Bedawîn — Site of *Comochara* — Nebk — Ride by Mâlûla to Damascus.

ON the 11*th October*, 1853, I set out, in company of the Rev. Mr. Barnett, on a tour to the town of Hŭms, whither

duty called us. We proposed to include in our excursion as many villages as possible, and in order to accomplish this, determined to proceed northward from Bââlbek through the great valley of Cœlesyria, and to return along the eastern side of Antilibanus. I made every preparation as usual for examining the antiquities and topography of the country, as far as time and opportunity might permit; and, as the country is little known, I here insert the result of my observations.[1]

At 12 o'clock we left Bâb Tûma, and riding across the plain to Burzeh proceeded thence to Saidnâya by a road a little to the right of that described formerly.[2] I thus gained a good bird's-eye view of the eastern section of the great plain of Sahra to the base of Jebel Tinîyeh, and afterwards passed through the little village of Ma'arra. We spent the night in the convent, as we now travelled without tents or equipage, save what our servants carried in their saddle-bags.

October 12th.—After attending the morning service in the church we again walked round the ruins of this interesting village, but the results of our researches have already been detailed. We then engaged a guide to conduct us over the great mountain-chain direct to Bââlbek. This we found a work of some difficulty, as the intervening country,

[1] A detailed account of this tour was transmitted to Dr. Robinson, of New York, and inserted by him in the 'Bibliotheca Sacra' for October, 1854. As that work has an extensive circulation, I do not consider it necessary to enter in this place into all the topographical details, as to the structure of the great mountain-range of Antilibanus, which are there given—especially so as the features of these mountains will be found faithfully delineated in the map attached to this work.

[2] See above, ch. v., section i., where a full description of Saidnâya, and the route between it and Damascus, may be found.

and indeed the whole northern section of the chain of Antilibanus, is the great stronghold of the "House of Harfûsh," the hereditary emîrs of Bâ'albek; and these, since the rebellion of the Metâwely in 1850, have been outlawed by the Turkish government. For a number of years it has been the secret policy of the local authorities in Damascus to exterminate this princely family. Several of them have been captured and are now exiles in Crete; some have been killed in battle, and a few have been privately murdered, whether by the instigation of government or not it is difficult to *prove*. The Emîr Sulimân, the present head of the house, defies the government, maintains a guard of a hundred horse, which he can increase fourfold on an emergency, and is the virtual governor of the whole district. Not a few of his followers live by plunder; and the flocks, and even the grain and houses, of the surrounding villages suffer from their depredations. Fortunately for us the emîr, though outlawed by the sultan, is a kind of English protégé, as indeed are most rebels in this and other lands at the present time. *We* had therefore nothing to fear, and succeeded in persuading the Christian guide that we could protect him if he would point out the way.

We left the convent at 8 o'clock, and, passing through the filthy streets of the village, followed a path leading in a north-western direction up the rocky side of Jebel Shurabîn. At 8·20 we saw the small village of Telfîta about 2 miles on our left, on the opposite side of a great recess in the mountains. The whole declivities are here cultivated in little patches among the lofty jagged rocks. The ruins of several chapels and oratories crown the

lower peaks, and stud the sides of Shurabîn, while on its summit stands the ancient convent (St. Cherubim!) from which it takes its name. At 8·50 we reached a commanding brow, from which the view was so extensive that I stopped a short time to make observations. From this spot I was able, by connecting points from which bearings had been formerly taken, to cover with a network of triangles the whole south-eastern section of the Antilibanus from Hermon to Yabrûd, as well as the great plain along its base. This district, with its peaks and ridges, and valleys and plains, was now spread before me like a map. The minaret at the East Gate of the city was clearly seen.

Starting again at 8·57, we reached the summit of the ridge in nine minutes, and immediately began to descend again by an easy slope in a little rugged valley. In twenty minutes we were upon the side of the great plateau, formerly described as the upper terrace of these eastern slopes. Seven minutes afterwards we struck the road from Menîn and Telfîta at the fountain of Sureir. This is the most direct route from Damascus to Bâalbek. Its course is from the city to Burzeh, thence through the pass of Maraba and up the Wady to Menîn, and then direct over arid declivities to Telfîta and Jubb Sureir, where we now stood. Around this place there is some cultivation. The soil is light and gravelly; but, being abundantly watered by the rains and snows of winter, it is not unproductive. We rode across the plateau in a direction about due north, having broken mountain-ridges about an hour on our right. Among these the guide pointed out the opening to the long wady Hureiry. The

central chain rose up in front like a vast wall; its summits have an uniform elevation from the lofty peaks above Bludân to two others of almost equal altitude in the parallel of Bâalbek.

We reached the north-western side of the plain at 10·53, having been 1 h. 27 m. in crossing it. At this place it is stony and barren, and prickly shrubs grow up among the rocks. Along the base of the mountain is a belt covered with the dwarf oak and wild plum. As we rode across this plateau we had been somewhat surprised to observe large numbers of beautiful wild flowers of every hue. In the spring season the mountains, plains, and valleys of this land are carpeted with flowers; but never in any other place had I seen so many in the autumn. It proves that this lofty plateau is less affected than the lower regions by the summer's sun. I here obtained a good view of the plateau, from the hills on the west to the wild glen at Yabrûd away on the east. The long ridge on the south-east, as seen from hence, extends unbroken from Jebel Shurabîn to Yabrûd. It appears very low in consequence of the elevation of the plateau, and its summit is rocky and jagged. The mountains on the west are loftier, but less regular; they cannot, in fact, be regarded as a *chain*, but as the terminations of broad side ridges that extend from the valley of the Barada to this place. The whole district, including the mountains around Saidnâya, is called *'Asâl*, or *Jubbet 'Asâl*, from the village 'Asâl el-Werd, whose gardens I saw in the direction of Yabrûd, about twelve miles distant.

At 11·15 we again mounted and rode up a little valley called Haurât, and after crossing a low ridge entered

another, much larger, from which we soon passed into a third. The scenery was now wild and grand. Lofty naked cliffs crowned the rugged mountain-range on the left, and the declivities on both sides were covered with thin forests of oak mingled with the wild plum and hawthorn. No living thing was within view as we wound among rocks and through defiles, save a few eagles soaring round jagged cliffs far overhead. We had just remarked how well such a region suits the bandit and the outlaw when a shrill cry from the mountain's side rang in our ears; it was answered by another from the opposite peak, but still no human being was in sight. After crossing a rising ground, a horseman, with a single attendant on foot, was seen approaching from the tangled wood, and the voices of numerous others were heard in the distance. We pressed on, however, gave the ordinary salutations to the strangers, and continued our journey in peace. Our Frank costume was a sufficient guarantee that we were neither spies nor government agents. At 11·55 we commenced the ascent of a rocky ridge apparently in the very centre of the mountains; but the valleys still ran eastward, showing that the watershed was in front. The whole strata from the plain of Damascus to this place are limestone, but here the sandstone begins to appear, cropping up at intervals in huge rounded masses, occasionally mingled with basalt; the oak also begins to give way to the pine and the juniper. After crossing a wild ravine behind the mountain-ridge, and traversing a little verdant plain, we reached the fountain called Ayûn ed-Dŭra at 12·40.

This fountain, with its plain, is in the very heart of the

great central chain, the loftiest peaks of which rise up in stern grandeur on every side. We dismounted and sat down on the grassy banks of the little stream to eat our lunch, for which an early breakfast and a ride of more than four hours and a quarter had given us a good appetite. Vast flocks of small birds hovered round us; we had disturbed them in their favourite haunt, and they now waited impatiently till we should again leave them in quiet possession. A few hawks, gliding close to the surface of the ground, or poised motionless high in air, showed that we were not the only disturbers of this feathered throng. One or two solitary vultures perched gloomy and sorrowful-like on a neighbouring cliff, and around them eagles swept in graceful circles. This place, in fact, seemed the choice retreat of every species of the feathered tribe that frequents these mountains: and beasts, too, visit it in no small numbers. As we rode up, a jackal sneaked away among the rocks. Over the whole plain were traces of the recent labours of the wild boar in search of his food; and at our feet, as we sat, was the broad track of a bear that had lately stooped to drink at the bubbling fountain. Antilibanus is but thinly peopled by man; but the lower animals, both birds and beasts, inhabit it in vast numbers. The multitude of eagles is almost incredible; they may be seen every day in large flocks circling round some towering cliff, or soaring aloft over their prey. On one occasion, when, wearied with a long ramble, I had fallen asleep amid the loftiest summits of the mountains, I was suddenly roused by a strange sound, as if of a whirlwind sweeping among the old juniper trees around me. On looking up, I saw twenty-four large

eagles dashing through the air, and most of them approaching in their rapid course within pistol-shot. Vultures are also very numerous, and hawks are found in almost endless variety. A species of daw, resembling the jackdaw of England, frequents the higher districts. Partridges abound in every part; and snipes and woodcocks wherever there is water. Of beasts, the bear is the largest: he is rather low, but long and powerfully made; of a dull brown colour. The wolf, the hyæna, the jackal, the wild boar, and the hare, are all numerous. A species of panther is found on Hermon, but I have never seen any of them.

At 1·15 we left the fountain, and rode up the mountain over strata of basalt. In ten minutes we reached the summit of the ridge, and the watershed between the Bukâ'a and the eastern plain. Here, as I stood looking along the ridge to the north-east, I had on my left the abrupt and rugged descent to wady Mârabûn, which, with its continuation wady Yahfûfeh, lay at my feet as if delineated on a map. Beyond them spread out the great plain of Cœlesyria, shut in by the lofty wall of Libanus. On the right I looked over jagged cliffs and confused mountain-peaks to the broad plateau of 'Asâl. I could distinguish the entrance of the little wady Haurât, through which we had passed on entering the mountains, bearing S. 55° E. My bearings from this point connected the eastern plain with the Bukâa and Bâalbek. The whole scenery in this section of the mountain-chain is singularly grand and rugged. The steep declivities on the west are deeply furrowed by wild ravines, while the ridges and peaks on the east, with the profound glens that divide them, are scantily clothed with the oak, the pine, and the juniper. The elevation of

the pass on which we now stood I estimated at about 6000 feet. It is somewhat lower than the average height of this part of the chain.

We now turned down a narrow path that descends the western declivities of the mountains by an easy gradient, in a general direction of north-by-east. In ten minutes we reached the side of a little meadow containing several small fountains, the water from which runs down a deep glen to wady Mârabûn. This may be regarded as the highest source of the river Yahfûfeh. Fifteen minutes after, we passed another fountain called *'Ain Hil-Jerâbek*, "The Fountain of the opening of the Knapsack." This, it appears from the name, which is not uncommon in these mountains, is a favourite resort of the shepherds, who are great epicures in water. They here collect their flocks in the heat of day, and, opening the *scrips* in which each one carries his humble fare, they eat their meals with a relish which those only can realize who breathe pure mountain air and are braced by vigorous exercise. Often in my wanderings have I sat beside the bubbling fountain in the midst of these simple and wild-looking shepherds of Antilibanus. I have seen their flocks gathered round them in one dense mass; and I have been not a little astonished and pleased to observe that this mingling creates no confusion. Each shepherd, when he has finished his repast, or when the time of rest is over, rises from his place and walks steadily away, calling to his sheep or goats, and immediately his own flock separate themselves from the throng and follow him. His companions do so too, and each flock follows its own shepherd.[3]

[3] See John x. 4, 5, where this singular method of leading the sheep and goats is used as a beautiful figure by our Saviour.

As we continued our route the scenery increased in grandeur; the mountain-side towering up on our right almost a sheer precipice, and the ravines opening on our left like yawning gulfs. At 2·38 we turned to the left in a direction about north-west, and after half an hour's descent by a difficult zigzag path we reached the fountain of Benaiyeh, near the ruined temple in the head of wady Mârabûn.[4] A few minutes afterwards we struck the road described in last journey, and proceeded along it to Bâ'albek, where we arrived as the sun was disappearing behind the lofty mountains of Libanus.

I had now crossed the Antilibanus by three distinct routes from Damascus to Bâ'albek, and in all had kept careful itineraries, and had taken numerous bearings. All these I laid down with care in the construction of my map, and found them to fall into each other with almost minute accuracy. But I have besides been enabled to ascertain the bearings of the two cities from *one point*—the lofty peak behind Bludân. From this place Bâ'albek is clearly seen, and the whole plain of Damascus is also in full view. The city itself is hid by the hill behind Salahîyeh, but every village on the plain was so familiar to me, that, by the aid of a good telescope, I had no difficulty in ascertaining its precise position. To prevent the possibility of error I took careful bearings of the prominent points, Tell Salahîyeh and Jebel Mâni'a. After I had discovered how great a change these observations

[4] There is here a slight error of seventeen minutes in the account of this tour as given in the 'Bibliotheca Sacra.' I know not how it occurred, but I suppose it must have been in the hurry of transcribing my notes.

effected in the relative positions of Damascus and Bâalbek, when compared with all former maps, I returned again to the same spot to verify my previous bearings, and found that I had made no error. In all maps of any pretensions to accuracy hitherto published, Bâalbek is represented as about 20′ farther west than Damascus, while in my map *it is 4′ east of it.* There is thus a difference of 24′ between this map and all others in the relative positions of these two cities. This great change has altered the whole features of the country, and especially of the mountain-range of Antilibanus. I had also made numerous observations to serve as checks in laying down the line of these mountains. One series of bearings was taken from the summit of Hermon; another from the lofty peak above Bludân; and I took, besides, a bearing of the summit of Hermon from the ruined village on the side of the Roman road, an hour S. by W. of Bâalbek.

Oct. 13th.—We left Bâalbek at 7·40, passing over heaps of ruins, the remains of former houses and the ancient wall, near one of the gates. Our course was now over a stony plain along which I thought I could observe traces of a Roman road. After winding for a time among low bleak hills, and crossing a little ridge, we reached the brow of a deep ravine coming down from the mountains and running across the plain in a direction nearly due west; and descending a little, dismounted beside the village of Nahleh at 8·43. Our general course had been north-east.[5] This village is situated on the summit of a

[5] By a typographical error our course from Bâ'albek to Nahleh is represented in the 'Bibliotheca Sacra' as having been part of the way N. 50° W. instead of N. 50° E. Our true course was as follows:—*First,*

cliff on the southern bank of the glen. It contains the foundations and portions of the walls of a massive temple, simple and chaste in its style like that on the hill at Mejdel 'Anjar. Immediately below the cliff is a fine fountain.

The great chain of Antilibanus opposite this place is composed of three distinct ridges; *that on the west* is lowest, and is separated from the others by wady Sibât, which seems from a distance to be a continuation of wady M'arabûn, but in reality wady Sibât cuts through the western ridge by the wild ravine above referred to below the village of Shâîbeh, and runs down into the Bukâ'a between Breitân and Neby Shît. The *central ridge* here appears for the first time rising over the former, gradually increasing in altitude as it runs north-east, until it overtops the others. The *eastern ridge* is the loftiest of all toward the south; but it decreases in height from this point onward. The ravine of Nahleh cuts deeply into the mountain-side, and a branch of it comes down a valley from the north-east, which divides a lofty side range from the main chain. This side range commences about a mile to the north-east of Nahleh, and forms the boundary of the Bukâ'a till its termination in the plain of Hŭms. These several features will be best understood by a glance at the map.

At 9·5 we again mounted, and, ascending the steep northern bank of the ravine, continued in our former course, skirting the eastern base of a line of little stony tells. In a quarter of an hour we turned more to the northward, and in another quarter observed on the right,

N. 50° E. for 35° min.; *second*, N. 35° E. for 10 min.; *third*, N. 50° E. for 18 min.

high up on the southern brow of the lofty side ridge, the walls of some ancient structure, built of large blocks of hewn stones. We reached Yunîn at 9·52. It is situated on the northern bank of a deep ravine, down which flows a fine stream. A little canal is conducted from it far to the northward. Along this our path lay for three quarters of an hour, when, on surmounting a rising ground, I obtained an extensive view northward, and here saw for the first time the monument of Hŭrmŭl far away on the distant horizon. This was an important point for connecting the plain of Hums with the central and southern sections of the Bukâà, I consequently took a series of bearings.[6] We now turned N. 25° E. and rode over a stony plain that slopes down to the base of Libanus. In three-quarters of an hour more we crossed a shallow wady with a little stream of water and some fields of maize, which were the only signs of cultivation on this dreary spot. At 12 o'clock we turned directly toward the village of 'Ain (N. 50° E.), now distinctly seen crowning one of the spurs of Antilibanus, and after a dreary ride of 55 minutes reached *Lebweh*. The watershed of the Bukâà is about three miles south of this place.

Lebweh consists of a few miserable huts situated on the side of a little tell, in the middle of a fine vale, which extends diagonally across the whole Bukâà from the base of Antilibanus to that of the opposite range. A large fountain of pure water gushes forth from the limestone rock at the foot of the former mountains, and a stream

[6] The more important bearings taken from this place were as follows:—Yunîn S. 10° E.; Deir el-Ahmer, on the road to the cedars, N. 77° W.; monument of Hŭrmŭl N. 30° E.

from it flows down the vale in a direction nearly due north. Its banks are covered with the most luxuriant vegetation, and there are verdant meadows and rich cornfields where the valley expands toward the base of Libanus. Three large ancient canals lead the water off from the stream at different elevations for the irrigation of the sides of the valley and the plain around. One of these is on the western side and two on the eastern. One of the latter is of great size and length, conducting a stream along the lower slopes of Antibilanus, a distance of more than fifteen miles. The fountain at Lebweh is the highest source of the Orontes.

Lebweh is evidently an ancient site. The whole tell on which the few modern hovels stand is covered with heaps of rubbish, the *débris* of former buildings, intermixed with some fragments of columns and hewn stones. On its northern side the massive foundations of a temple, with a few feet of the walls, may still be seen; but besides these, one stone has not been left upon another. All is ruin and desolation. The similarity of the name would seem to suggest the identity of this place with the ancient *Lybon*, mentioned in the itinerary of Antonine as lying on the great road between Emesa and Heliopolis; but the distance of Lybon from the latter city is said in the Itinerary to be 32 Roman miles, whereas Lebweh is only 17 Roman miles from Bâalbek. In the same Itinerary this city seems to be called *Cona*.[7] On the whole, it is probable that Lebweh, which stands undoubtedly on the line of route between those two cities, may be the modern

[7] See Itin. Provinc. Omni. Anton. Aug. pp. 31, 32; see also Reland, Pal., p. 420; Ritter, Pal. und Syr., iv. 170-71.

representative of the ancient Lybon. Its position beside such a large fountain would give it importance in every age. If so, the numbers in the Itinerary must be erroneous.

After a brief stop to examine the ruins and the canals we again mounted and rode up the gentle slope to 'Ain, which we reached in three-quarters of an hour. A few ancient tombs hewn in the soft rock on the south side of the village are the only evidences of antiquity here visible. Passing through it, we continued in the same course, and in twenty-seven minutes more reached the summit of an elevated ridge—a spur from the main chains of Anti-libanus, whose naked precipitous sides now rose up immediately on our right. On our left was a line of low white hills connected with the mountains by the ridge on which we stood. From this elevated spot we had an extensive view over the great plains to the south-east. In front was a deep and picturesque glen; its sides in some places walls of white rock, while below lay rich gardens and blooming orchards on the banks of a little silvery stream. On the right bank stands the village of Fîkeh. In ten minutes we descended by a difficult zigzag path to the side of the gardens, and, after winding for a short time in narrow lanes shaded by dense foliage, we struck up the opposite bank through the scattered houses of the village. We now crossed another bleak ridge, and in half an hour more reached Ras Bâalbek. Passing over heaps of rubbish and ruins, in the midst of which stands an old church with a stone roof, we rode on to the convent, where we were kindly received by the village priest.

Ras Bâalbek contains about forty poor houses, con-

structed chiefly out of the materials of ancient buildings of considerable extent and solidity. There are, on the south side of the houses, large heaps of rubbish mixed with broken columns and massive hewn stones; and in the foundations of the convent, which stands a few hundred yards up the valley, are stones of great size. There are no inscriptions, however, nor is there even a local tradition to serve as a guide to the ancient name.

October 14th.—Accompanied by an intelligent guide, I ascended the lofty tell on the north side of the convent, at the earliest dawn, to obtain a clear view of the northern base of Antilibanus, of the vale of the Orontes, and the great plain of Hŭms. I was amply repaid for my morning's toil in the magnificent prospect I enjoyed. Standing amid the crumbling ruins of an old convent, I rested my compass on a stone, and commenced a careful survey of the plain I purposed on this and the following day to traverse. On my right ran the base of the mountains in an indented line N. 47° E., until they sank down into the great plain. In this line about ten miles distant I saw the towers and wide-spreading ruins of Jûsy scattered over the surface of the dreary plain; and about an hour to the north lay the large village of Zerraà, with its luxuriant gardens. Far away on the distant horizon the rays of the rising sun lighted up the castle-hill of Hŭms. Its lake, too, was there like a sheet of burnished gold, to the west of the town; and far beyond it appeared the pale blue summits of the *Kurûn Hamâh*. The village of Kâ'a lay in the plain half an hour distant (N. 34° E.), and the waters of the great canal from Lebweh covered the fields around it with verdure. And there stood the strange monument

of Hŭrmŭl all solitary in the midst of the desert, like a stranger in a strange land. The course of the Orontes was not visible, save where, here and there, a break in the tall reeds and luxuriant herbage that conceal its sluggish waters revealed a spot like a spangle on a rich robe.

In the parallel of Fîkeh the side ridges of the two great mountain-chains project considerably into the plain of the Bukâ'a, so that it is not much over two miles in width. There is a gentle slope from the base of Antilibanus down to the deep ravine of the river Lebweh, which runs northward, close to the foot of Libanus. Along this slope winds the great canal above referred to, and I observed some traces of an ancient road running parallel to it towards Kâ'a and Riblah.

As it was our desire this day to visit the great fountain of the *'Asy*, the ancient Orontes, and to proceed from thence by way of Hŭrmŭl and Jûsy to Riblah, we selected an active guide to conduct us by the most direct routes to the several places. We mounted our horses at 8·5, and rode down the little valley, over heaps of ruins, to the fine fountain. Here we entered among the luxuriant gardens and orchards, and a few minutes afterwards emerged on the open plain. In half an hour we crossed the great canal. Beyond it the plain becomes barren and stony. Our course was N. 25° W., direct toward the great fountain, the position of which our guide pointed out by a white path running down to it from the declivities on the opposite side. At 9·45 we reached a small ruined village on the side of the ravine, called Khirbet el-Hyât; and from this place, descending the

steep bank, we came, in ten minutes more, to the side of a pool on the right bank of the river Lebweh. Here we left our horses, and, passing round it, scrambled over a ledge of smooth rock, and reached the brow of a low conglomerate cliff, looking over which we saw the whole waters of this fine fountain bursting forth from beneath the rock into the bed of the stream. It is far inferior in grandeur to Fîjeh, and the united waters here did not appear to me more voluminous than those of the Barada. It is difficult, however, to judge of the volume of a river near such a fountain. The water issues from the restraining grasp of the rocks with such force, and rushes in its rocky bed with such swiftness, that the river is much larger than it appears. The banks of the stream are lofty and precipitous, and its course very tortuous. It continues to run northward for about a mile, and then, turning east-by-north, flows in a winding channel towards Riblah. Having examined the fountain, we re-ascended the right bank, and proceeded along it a few hundred yards, till we approached the excavated convent of *Mâr Marûn*. It is entirely hewn out of the solid rock, in the side of the upper cliff, and its apartments are said to be numerous and spacious. It was now, however, filled with sheep and goats, and several savage dogs kept guard over them, so that we did not attempt to enter. The side-range of Libanus rises up abruptly from the chasm through which the river winds. Its sides are deeply furrowed by glens, and sparsely covered with coppice and oak-trees. These glens do not descend at right angles to the course of the ridge, but diagonally toward the east.

At 10·20 we remounted our horses, and, ascending the

bank, proceeded in a straight course across the rolling plain to the monument of Hŭrmŭl (N. 70° E.),[8] which we reached at 11·5. As I approached it I felt much disappointed in its apparent dimensions. It did not seem more than thirty feet high, and, when I observed two foxes taking refuge behind some loose stones near the summit, I fancied I could soon dislodge them. But when I reached its base, and drew up my horse beneath its shadow, all disappointment vanished. . . . Time was now precious. We did not know the distance to Jûsy, or how long we might wish to remain amid its ruins. I therefore hastened to sketch the monument and its bas-reliefs, and then to take a series of bearings of the principal places in sight.[9]

While I was thus occupied Mr. Barnett was engaged in making *fac-similes* of the marks and cuttings found on the lower part of the monument. These are singular, but all manifestly of a comparatively recent date, and they were never intended to represent words. Wandering shepherds and idle Bedawîn have for ages been busy at work in the carving of these strange signs. The Arabs are a singular people in this respect. If one of them observes a heap of stones, he will assuredly put one on the top of it; or if he sees a number of rags tied to some old tree, he will not pass till one has been separated

[8] By a typographical error, this is written, in the 'Bibliotheca Sacra,' S. 10° E.

[9] The bearings I took from this place are of great importance in delineating this section of the plain with the course of the 'Asy, and still more important as connecting Hermon with Hŭms. The former bears S. 34° W., and the latter N. 42½° E. A sketch of the monument may be seen at the head of this chapter.

from his own stock and hung up among its brethren, and I suppose it is the very same propensity that leads them to add to these marks.

That there was at one time an inscription on this monument I have little doubt. It is not probable that such a building would be erected on such a spot without some inscribed record of its object and of its founder. A minute examination of the fallen stones on the western side might amply repay the trouble and expense, by bringing to light some record of an incident or epoch in the history of this land. The bas-reliefs on the three sides, which still remain entire, are better executed than I had expected to find them. True, they have not the freedom or boldness of Grecian and Roman sculpture, yet they are far superior to many of those discovered by Layard amid the ruins of Nineveh. On one side is an elephant standing in the centre, with a bear *rampant* in front, and a bull apparently about to charge him from behind. On another side are two stags, one standing and the other lying. On the third side is a wild boar attacked by two dogs; two long spears are sticking in his sides, hurled at him by some unseen pursuers. Spears, arrows, and other weapons of the chace, are disposed around each figure in groups. The monument stands on a pedestal composed of three layers of basalt, retreating like steps, each layer two feet high. It is divided into three stories. The first is a cube of solid masonry, 29½ feet on each side, and about 26 feet high, with pilasters at the corners, supporting a plain cornice. On the upper part of this story are the bas-reliefs. The second story is somewhat smaller, and has two pilasters

on each side besides those at the angles. The third is a pyramid. In the whole structure are forty layers of stones, and, each being about two feet high, the total elevation is thus 80 feet.

Such is the monument of Hŭrmŭl as it now stands in solitary grandeur on this desolate plain. Its founder and its story are alike unknown, and will probably remain so until some zealous antiquarian effects a thorough examination of that section which now lies a heap of confused ruins. The only building I have seen in this country that appears to have borne any resemblance to it is the sepulchral monument above referred to at Suweideh in the Haurân.[1]

At 12·20 we again mounted and turned our horses' heads toward Jûsy, whose towers we could distinguish in the distance at the base of Antilibanus. We had

[1] See above, chap. xii. vol. ii. p. 120. Abulfeda appears to refer to this monument when giving an account of the river Orontes or 'Asy. He says,—"The beginning of the river is from a small stream flowing from a village near Bâalbek, called *Râs*. From Râs this stream runs north until it reaches a place called Kâim Hŭrmŭl, between Jûsieh and Râs, where it passes through a wady. And there most of the river ('Asy) springs up from a place called the 'Monk's Cave,' and thence it runs northward till it passes Jŭsieh, and falls into the lake Kădes." —*Tab. Syr.*, p. 150. This description is far from accurate. There is no fountain of any importance at Râs. It is evident Abulfeda confounds Râs and Lebweh. In the latter place, as we have seen, is the head source of the 'Asy. From thence it flows across the plain diagonally in a northern direction to the base of Libanus, distant 4 miles; and along this it winds in a deep chasm nearly 8 miles farther N. by E. to the great fountain called the "Monk's Cave," from its proximity to the excavated convent of Mâr Marûn. A mile beyond this fountain the enlarged stream turns E. by N., and flows 10 miles farther across the plain by Ribleh to near the village of Zerra'a. Here it turns nearly due north, and, after a course of 8½ miles, falls into the Lake of Hŭms, or *Kades*, as it is called by Abulfeda.

been warned both at Bâalbek and Râs to be on our guard against the 'Omûr, a powerful and warlike tribe of Bedawîn, that had lately pitched their tents among the mountains south of Kâa and Jûsy; but as we now saw the great plain clear before us, and as we were besides well mounted and well armed, we resolved at all hazards to visit the ruins of this ancient city. Under ordinary circumstances, even when this plain is filled with Bedawîn, there is little danger in travelling among them; but of late the regular troops have been removed to the seat of war, and the authority of the government is consequently insufficient to prevent robberies or to punish the guilty. The tribes of the desert always know how to take advantage of such times, and all travellers must be prepared to defend themselves, as otherwise there is no security.

We at first leaned a little to the right to avoid a tell thickly strewn with broken fragments of basalt; but after passing it we rode straight to our destination. Nothing could be imagined more dreary and desolate than this undulating plain around the monument. Fragments of basalt, intermixed with limestone and flint, almost completely cover its surface. The few stunted shrubs that spring up among them appear as if charred, and there is no other sign of vegetable life at this season. The scorching rays of the summer's sun, beating without remission for long months on the black basalt, burn up every herb, and blast every shrub. At 1·10 the village of Kâa was about two miles on our right. A short distance from it is a large building like a fortress, but it is probably one of those khâns that are met with on all the principal thoroughfares of Syria. In 25 minutes more we crossed

one of the branches of the great canal from Lebweh; there was now no water flowing in it, but there were ample evidences that it had only been turned off in some other course a few hours previously. A few minutes afterward we entered a tract of fine deep soil, well cultivated and abundantly watered. The change was as sudden as it was remarkable from the parched desert we had just left behind. This fertile tract continued for three-quarters of an hour, and the road from Kâà to Ribleh runs through it. The stony plain here again commences; we rode across it until at three o'clock we reached Jûsy.

A shallow wady here descends from the mountains, and in this stands Jûsy, about a quarter of an hour from their base. The western ridge of Antilibanus is intersected by a deep ravine just above Kâà, and between it and another ravine above Jûsy there is a recess or bosom. Eastward of the ruins the spurs project again into the plain; and thus these ruins, as seen from the tell at Râs, appeared in a line with the base of the mountains. Seldom have I seen a place, even in this land of desolation, so completely desolate as this; and never have I seen ruins of such extent so totally devoid of interest. Their present desolation is no doubt in a great measure owing to the want of water. The wants of the city were supplied by subterranean reservoirs which still exist in great numbers. These were filled by the winter rains, or probably by streams from the mountains during the rainy season. The ruins are about two miles and a half in circumference, but there are no traces among them of architectural beauty or wealth. The principal building is a square castle, 132 yards on each side, with flanking

towers at the angles. One of its gates is still standing; it is low, with a square top, and is encompassed by a deep moulding. The walls are constructed of large hewn stones, and the masonry appears to be of the later Roman period. Four square towers, of much inferior workmanship and later date, are the only other buildings that now exist. Over the door of one of these is a cross in relief. Large heaps of rubbish appear on every side, intermixed with piles of hewn stones. The foundations of large houses, and even the lines of rectangular streets, can in places be traced; but it appears as if a large number of the stones had been removed for the construction of some other buildings, probably those of the *modern Jûsy*, which is only half an hour distant north-by-east. These ruins are called *Jûsy el-Kadîm*, "Old Jûsy."

Abulfeda mentions both a town or village and a district called Jûsieh;[2] but I am of opinion that it is the *modern Jûsy* he refers to, and not these ruins. There are here no evidences that this city was ever inhabited by Muslems, or since their conquest of Syria. There is not a vestige of Saracenic architecture in the place. There is not a mosk, nor a minaret, nor a prayer-niche; and there can be little doubt that, had any ever existed, they would have been spared at least until all other buildings had been completely destroyed. The modern Jûsy is only a mile and a half distant, and it contains important buildings which appeared to me, from the place I viewed them, to be of Saracenic origin and not of modern date. Here too is a large mosk with a fine minaret still standing, though the place is deserted.

[2] Tab. Syr., pp. 27, 150.

This is just such a city as might have been erected at the command of some monarch or powerful provincial deputy, but which could never have attained importance of itself, or from the advantages of its position. In fact it could never have existed at all, except during the period when this land was densely populated. It has no supply of water; it is encompassed by an arid stony plain; while on the banks of the river, only a few miles below, are most eligible sites for cities. For these reasons we might naturally ascribe its origin to some of those Grecian monarchs of Syria, who appear to have had a mania for architecture. But the present remains do not seem to be of quite so early a date; and, so far as I could see, there is not a single inscription among them. It has been conjectured that this is the *Laodicia Scabiosa* of Ptolemy,[3] or the Λαοδικεια εν τῳ Λιβανῳ of the ancient coins and medals referred to by Strabo as standing near the northern end of Antilibanus.[4] There is also a *Laudicia* mentioned in the Itinerary of Antonine on the great road between Hemisa and Heliopolis, which is doubtless identical with that referred to by Ptolemy and Strabo. The distances there given, however, do not at all agree with the position of the present ruins. The following is an extract from this Itinerary:—

Hemisa	M.P.	
Laudicia	„	xviii
Lybo	„	xxxii
Heliopoli	„	xxxii

In enumerating the towns along the road in an opposite direction the same Itinerary gives them thus:—

[3] Geog. v. 15, "Laodicines Civitates."
[4] Strab. Geog. xvi. p. 520.

Heliopoli	M.P.	
Cœna	„	xxxii
Laudicia	„	xxxii
Hemesa	„	xviii [5]

According to these tables, therefore, Laodicia lay eighteen Roman miles distant from Hemesa, and sixty-four from Heliopolis, but Jûsy is twenty-five miles distant from the former place, and only about forty from the latter. If therefore the Itinerary is correct, Jûsy cannot be identified with the ancient Laodicia. I entertain considerable doubt, however, about the accuracy of the numbers in the Itinerary. From a careful survey of the whole region I have ascertained that the entire distance between Bâ'albek and Hŭms, by the line along which the ancient road appears to have run, is not over *sixty-five* Roman miles, while as represented in the tables it is *eighty-two*. Yet still I do not see any ground for identifying Jûsy with *Laodicia*.[6]

We left the side of the ruins at 2·30, and had modern Jûsy a short distance on our right at four o'clock. Here are also ruins of considerable extent. A tall minaret is the most conspicuous object. I regret that we did not turn aside to visit them, as it is probable among the stones which have been brought here from the other town some Greek inscriptions may still exist. The soil around the village is fertile, and a canal from the 'Asy at one time brought abundant water for irrigation. Ibrahîm Pasha rebuilt the village, and planted in it a colony of peasants,

[5] Itiner. Anton. August. pp. 31, 32; see also Reland, Pal., p. 420.

[6] From the north-eastern corner of these ruins I took the following among other bearings:—Kuseir and Zerra'a, N. 5° E.; Jŭsy el-Jedîd, N. 9° W.; Riblah, N. 28° W.

but when his government was overthrown by western intervention, and the wild desert hordes were no longer held in check by his strong hand, Jûsy, like many other places, was soon laid waste again. Last year a wealthy Christian of Hŭms farmed the village, and brought to it a little colony from Sŭdŭd, the chief seat of the ancient Jacobites, but the Bedawîn again came and quarrelled with the new occupiers; one of the former was killed, and the villagers, to escape blood-revenge, were forced to desert their newly erected homes. . . . . Continuing our course over a fine plain, we reached Riblah at 4·35.

Riblah is one of the most ancient sites in this land; but it is now a wretched village of some forty houses, situated on the right bank of the 'Asy. The banks of the river are here low, and a plain of great fertility and beauty stretches away on every side. The only remains of antiquity now seen are the foundations and lower walls of a square tower, constructed of large hewn stones. The sheikh informed us, however, that in the gardens and fields around traces of ancient buildings of considerable extent are found beneath the rich soil.

In defining the northern border of the land promised of God to the Israelites, RIBLAH is mentioned in connection with other cities, among which are Hamath and Zedad: "And the coast shall go down from Shepham to *Riblah*, *on the east side of Ain*." [7] There cannot be any doubt that this is the site of the city there referred to. It is described as being upon the "east side of Ain;" but *Ain* is the Hebrew word for a fountain, and it may therefore be read "Riblah on the east side of the fountain;" and thus it is

[7] Num. xxxiv. 11.

in the Septuagint, Βηλα ἀπο ανατολων επι πηγας. Now Riblah stands about nine miles nearly due east of the great fountain of the Orontes; I am therefore inclined to think that the Ain referred to in the above passage, as being on the west of Riblah, is the fountain above described. In the year B.C. 611, Pharaoh-nechoh, king of Egypt, conquered the armies of Judah; and Josiah the king fell in the battle on the plain of Megiddo.[8] Pharaoh marched northward and penetrated to Mesopotamia; and it appears that the city of Riblah, which is described as being in the land of Hamath, remained for some time in his hands, as some months afterwards he banished Jehoahaz the young king of Judah, and imprisoned him in that city.[9] Three years afterwards the Egyptian monarch was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and driven out of Asia. The conqueror seized northern Syria and marched to Jerusalem.[1] Riblah remained in his possession for many years. In the year B.C. 588 the headquarters of this monarch were established here while he prosecuted the war against the Jews; and when Jerusalem at last fell, and Zedekiah with his sons was taken captive, they were conducted to this city, where a dreadful fate was in store for them, which is thus related by the sacred historian: "And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon."[2]

[8] Herodotus, Euterpe, 159; 2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30; 2 Chron. xxxv. 20-24.

[9] 2 Kings xxiii. 33.

[1] Joseph. cont. Apion. i. 19.

[2] 2 Kings xxv. 7.

The name of Riblah does not afterwards appear in history. It is mentioned by Eusebius in his 'Onomasticon,' but he simply says that it was a "town of the Babylonians." Jerome adds that it is now called Antioch, but for this assertion there is not a shadow of evidence.[3] The glory of Riblah has long since passed away. One can well see, however, that a more suitable situation for the head-quarters of a great army could nowhere be selected in this land—the rich plain, the salubrious air, the abundant waters, and the ready access by easy and open roads to every district of the country, whether maritime or inland, all unite in rendering Riblah a strategic position of the first importance. The military monarch of Babylon was evidently well acquainted with this land, and perfectly capable of taking advantage of its resources.

The ridge of Antilibanus rapidly decreases in altitude beyond the ruins of Jûsy; but before it sinks down into the plain there is a very singular pass which intersects its northern end, leaving a group of hills about three miles in length completely isolated. From Riblah I saw quite through this pass; and a line drawn from this place through it, and continued across the plain on the opposite side, would run about two miles north of Hasya.

October 15th.—We started this morning from Riblah at 6·7, glad to effect our escape from the myriads of fleas that had assailed us during the night. Never before, during all my travels in this land, had I suffered such torture from these animals. Our course now lay along the winding banks of the 'Asy, and a busy pastoral scene here presented itself to our view. The black tents of the

[3] Onomasticon, s. v. *Reblatha*, p. 130.

Bedawîn lined the borders of the river. Thousands of sheep and goats, filling the air with their bleatings, were going forth to pasture, each flock led by its own shepherd. They followed him, for they knew his voice. Vast herds of camels had already wandered off to some distance; and as the old ones were solemnly browsing amid the luxuriant herbage, the young were striving to convert their ungainly motions into something like play. Peasants too were in the fields, turning up the soil with primitive-looking ploughs, and urging on their teams with patriarchal goads. It was just such a scene as one might have witnessed on the same spot three thousand years ago. It was with such pictures of life and customs the prophets of God were familiar in ancient days, and from them they drew those beautiful and striking figures we read and admire in their writings. The beautiful language of the Psalmist seemed now doubly expressive:— "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; *he leadeth me beside the still waters.*" [4]

At 6·30 we crossed the first tributary of the 'Asy, by a deep and difficult ford. It comes down from the village of Zerra'a, three quarters of an hour on our right. The river here turns nearly due north, toward the lofty tell called Neby Mindow, and our road lay along its right bank. Hundreds of wildfowl float upon its surface, or stalk along the water's edge. The nimble duck and melancholy heron are seen at almost every step, while stately storks wander over the neighbouring fields. At 7 o'clock the village of Kuseir lay half an hour on our

[4] Ps. xxiii. 1, 2.

right, in the midst of a naked but fertile plain; and 15 minutes afterwards I noticed a little island in the river, containing a large mill. A fine bridge here spans the right channel. At 8·13 we were opposite Tell Neby Mindow, situated on the left bank about half a mile from our road. A small village and a white-domed wely stand upon its summit, and I could see by the aid of my glass that the sides and the tract of ground around its base are strewn with heaps of rubbish and prostrate ruins. This is evidently a site of considerable antiquity, and a city of importance must at one time have occupied it. Its position would answer well to the *Laudicia* of the Itinerary of Antonine, as it is just *eighteen* Roman miles from Hŭms; and when allowance is made for the necessary curves in the road, its distance from Lebweh is about *thirty miles*. I was anxious to visit the place, but the desire of reaching Hŭms at an early hour prevented me. I had been informed at Riblah that a large tributary falls into the 'Asy beside the tell, and I now tried to distinguish the precise point of junction, but was not able, owing to the reeds and rank grass that cover the banks and plain around. It appeared, however, from the nature of the ground, that the tell and ruins occupy the angle above the point of junction. The source of this tributary is a large fountain, called 'Ain et-Tannûr, about an hour distant.

After a delay of seven minutes employed in these observations, and in taking bearings, we again set out.[5]

[5] From this place I saw the strong castle el-Hŭsn on the southern brow of the Nusairiyeh mountains, bearing N. 38° W. The bearing of Tell Mindow from Riblah is N. 5° W., and Kuseir lies from the former S. 38° E.

In five minutes we had on our left the small village of Arjûn, and in twenty minutes more I saw on the opposite side of the river a considerable village, apparently encompassed by ancient ruins. Its name, as given me by an Arab woman, was Um el-Adâm. Ten minutes on our right I observed a singular rectangular mound, hollow in the centre, and encompassed by a dyke of earth of uniform height along the sides, but elevated at the corners. As seen from the road it appears to be square, and each side from two to three hundred yards in length. It is probably the remains of an ancient entrenched camp. Ten minutes afterwards we passed Kefr Mûsa, on the left bank of the river, and the ruins of a small village opposite it; and in twelve minutes more we halted on the summit of a high artificial mound, from which I obtained a good view of the southern end of the lake around the place where the 'Asy falls into it. From hence I made some important observations tending to fix the true position of the south-western shore, and the course of the river from the bend at Zerra'a, by Tell Mindow. The castle-hill of Hŭms was full in view, and another lofty tell at the north-eastern extremity of the lake. The results of these will be seen from the map.[6] Towards the west, the broad opening between the great chain of Libanus and the Nusairîyeh mountains was now clearly distinguishable; and this must evidently have been regarded not only as a conspicuous landmark, but an

[6] El-Hŭsn was not visible from this tell owing to the intervening swell in the great plain west of the lake. The bearing of Hŭms from this tell is N. 55° E., and, as our route hitherto along the bank of the river had been about N. 25° E., we thus turned here considerably to the right. The road runs in nearly a straight line from this place to the castle-hill.

important pass in every age of Syrian history. It is the natural entrance from the coast to the whole of this great plain; and the regular road from Riblah, Hŭms, and Hamah to Tripoli, and the whole maritime villages around it, passes through it.

Descending from the tell, we galloped after our servants along the fine plain. We soon overtook them, and entered the village of Kefr 'Ady together at 9·20, twenty-three minutes after leaving the tell. The margin of the lake is here about ten minutes distant; and a little island with a lofty artificial mound lies half a mile from the shore. At 9·55 we had Shaumerîyeh a short distance on our left. The margin of the lake soon afterwards approaches close to the road; but being greatly indented, the distance varies every few yards. At 10·25 we reached Kuseib, a small village situated on a low mound whose base is washed by the waves. After a pause of ten minutes we turned aside from the direct route to visit the great dam at the eastern end of the lake, and to ascend a lofty artificial mound near it. Sweeping round the winding shore, we reached the summit of this tell in fifteen minutes, and from it had a commanding view of the lake and the surrounding plain. On the south and east this plain is perfectly flat, and has a fertile soil; but it is only in part cultivated. On the north the ground slopes gently upwards, and the surface seems thickly covered with loose stones of basalt. The trap formation extends southward to near the base of Antilibanus.

We rode hence a few hundred yards along the shore to the end of the dam, where we dismounted, and, giving our horses to the servants, walked along its summit to near the

square tower on the opposite side. This is a work of high antiquity, and was intended to raise the water to such a height as would enable the peasants to conduct it in canals for irrigation over the whole plain around Hŭms. Some of these canals are still in repair, and carry water to the gardens and fields along the banks of the river; but the greater number are neglected and in ruins. The embankment I estimated at about a quarter of a mile in length; but in no place does it exceed fourteen feet in height. It has been built and rebuilt times without number. Specimens of the workmanship of every nation that has in its period ruled over these plains may here be seen, from the proud successors of the great Alexander, and the procurators of imperial Rome, down to the pashas and petty provincial governors of modern Turkey. From this place the river flows through a broad shallow wady toward the town, sweeping round to the northwards at the distance of about half a mile. Ten minutes below the dam, on the left bank of the wady, is the little village of Suddeh; and farther down I saw Hadîdeh and Rubeiyeh.

At 11·30 we again mounted and struck across the rolling plain, through fine fields, to the main road, which we reached in a quarter of an hour. The road is wide and good, and the plain can scarcely be surpassed in fertility. The banks of the river on our left were now lined with the gardens and orchards of the city; while the white castle-hill rose up over the swell of the plain directly in front. At 12 o'clock we saw Nukeireh, about twenty minutes distant on our right, and beside it an artificial mound. Half an hour farther Kefr 'Aya stood on the same side. In a few minutes more we passed close to a lofty tell on

the left of the road; and some distance east of it is the small village called Wely Bab 'Omar. At 1·15 we entered the gate of Hŭms.

The town of *Hŭms* is situated in the midst of a vast plain that extends in some places till it meets the horizon. One of my first spare hours during my short stay was employed in ascending the castle-hill and examining minutely the whole region within the range of vision, taking careful bearings of every village and prominent object in view. I was accompanied by a Greek priest called Esa, reputed one of the most learned men in Hŭms, and Sulimân 'Awad, a member of the ancient Jacobite church, intimately acquainted with the whole surrounding country, and noted for his intelligence and veracity. On the north the plain extends unbroken to a group of four hills, the two centre ones of which are called *Kurûn Hamâh*, "the Horns of Hamâh." The valley between them, in which the town of Hamâh stands, bears N. 13° E. On the road to it, about 2½ hours distant, is a tell with ruins, and a village called Bîseh. A little eastward are seen the blue summits of a distant mountain-range, where, according to Sulimân, are many villages whose houses are all constructed of stone. This is the district of Salemîyah, mentioned by Abulfeda.[7] Eastward of these mountains the plain meets the horizon. About due east commences another range, and extends southward until it joins the eastern branches of Antilibanus. The caravan-road to Damascus runs over the plain in nearly a straight line to Hasya (S. 4° W.), having only a slight curve to the west. A lofty conical peak in the northern section of Antilibanus, called Jebel

[7] Tab. Syr., pp. 27, 105. See also Bib. Res., vol. iii., App. pp. 177-78.

Halîmeh, forms a conspicuous object from this place; as does also the monument of Hŭrmŭl, standing in the very centre of the great gap between Libanus and Antilibanus. Between the former range and the Nusairîyeh mountains is the opening above referred to; but the view in this direction is shut in by the rising ground on the west of the lake. This lake of Hŭms, or *Kades*, as Abulfeda calls it,[8] is a fine sheet of water. By careful bearings and calculations I have ascertained that its extreme length is a little over six miles, and its greatest breadth three. It is in a great measure, if not entirely, artificial. The dam is six miles distant from Hŭms. Along the banks of the river, opposite the town, are the gardens of Hŭms, celebrated alike for their beauty and the abundance of their fruits.

Such was the wide panorama that spread out around me as I stood amid the ruins of this old castle. An unbroken plain, extending for many hours on every side, without a hill to vary the monotony and without even a solitary tree, save the little clump in the gardens of the city. The villages only occur at long intervals, and there is no other sign of life or habitation. Turkish rapacity and misrule have contributed to lay waste one of the fairest

[8] Tab. Syr., p. 157. Abulfeda's account of this lake is so clear and valuable, that I here insert it. "The Lake Kades, this is the Lake of Hŭms. Its length from north to south is one-third of a day's journey, and its breadth is equal to the length of the dam, which will be presently given. It is formed from the river Orontes, by a dam which is built along its northern side, of very ancient origin, and is attributed to Alexander. In the middle of the dam are two towers constructed of black stone. The length of the dam east and west is 1287 *Dr'as*, and its breadth 18½. And this dam stops the great river, so that, if it were destroyed, the lake would no longer exist. It is in a plain, and its distance from Hŭms is a part of a day westward."

portions of Syria, and the few inhabitants that still cling to the soil can only manage to drag out a life of toil and poverty by paying "black mail" to Arab chiefs and exorbitant taxes to Turkish pashas.

Almost the only objects of interest in an antiquarian point of view in this whole region are the artificial mounds that meet the eye in every part of the plain, but which occur in greatest numbers along the banks of the 'Asy. They are regular in form, generally truncated cones, and vary in height from 50 to 250 feet. The sides and summits are universally covered with loose whitish gravel, like the débris of some structure originally composed of bricks and small stones united with cement. These mounds are also found in the Bukâ'a and plain of Damascus. Villages generally stand either upon or beside them, and fountains, or large cisterns, and wells are always found near those that are situated at a distance from the river's bank. They appear to be in every respect similar to the mounds on the plains of Mesopotamia and Assyria described by Layard and others, and from which monuments and sculptures of such great interest and beauty have lately been brought to light. It is highly probable that, were some of the more extensive of these Syrian mounds excavated, sculptured tablets, like those of Nimroud and Kouyunjik, would be discovered, at least in sufficient number to repay the labour and expense. The bas-relief already referred to at the tell el-Salahîyeh, on the plain of Damascus, proves the existence of sculpture in some of them, and forms an interesting and important monumental evidence of the occupation of this

region by the ancient Assyrians, and of the truth of the statements in the Sacred Record.[9]

The mound on which the castle of Hŭms stands, or rather stood, is of this character. I estimated its greatest diameter at 300 yards, and its elevation 200 feet. It was formerly encompassed by a deep moat, now in part filled up with rubbish from the town. Its sloping sides were paved with small square blocks of basalt, thus forming an excellent escarpment: portions of it still remain, but by far the greater part has been carried off to pave the streets of the town. Round the summit was a lofty wall of great strength, the facing being of large blocks of limestone, and the centre, rubble embedded in strong cement. Not a fragment of the castle itself now remains, and the only buildings standing are a few portions of the exterior flanking towers along the northern wall, which are chiefly of Saracenic origin. The whole summit of the mound is covered with heaps of rubbish, mixed with which I observed several large fragments of red and gray granite columns, the remains, no doubt, of the splendid temple that once occupied this site. Underneath are numerous large vaulted chambers and deep cisterns. A modern wely, with a white dome, stands on the summit, and is a conspicuous object for many miles around.

Hŭms stands on the northern side of the castle-hill, and is one of the cleanest and most regular towns I have seen in Syria. The streets are in general strongly paved, and the walls of the houses are of stone, so that there is not such an accumulation of mud and dust as in Damascus. No buildings of any extent or antiquity

[9] Compare 2 Kings xvi. 10, xvii. 24, xv. 29, xxiv. 7.

remain; but large hewn stones, and fragments of columns of granite, basalt, and limestone are seen scattered in great profusion through the streets, and bear ample testimony to its antiquity and former architectural beauty. It is encompassed with modern walls, with the exception of the side next the castle, but they are only sufficient to check a sudden incursion of the wild Bedawîn. On the north-west side, near the barracks, are foundations of ancient baths, and I there saw some squares of fine mosaic pavement. I observed several fragments of Greek inscriptions in the walls and streets, but none of them of any historical importance. The town is said to contain 20,000 inhabitants, 7000 of whom are Christians, chiefly of the Greek Church. There is here a small community of the ancient Syrians or Jacobites. These are a singular and interesting people. They have not the cringing subdued look of the other Christians, but are independent in spirit, and bold and resolute in conduct. They are all originally from the village of Sŭdŭd, and are thence called Sŭdŭdîyeh. Ninety years ago not a single Jacobite was found save in that village, but now they number 6000 souls, and colonies from them occupy the villages of Zeidân, Meskĭneh, Feirûzy, Furtăka, and Kuseib, and others have settled in Kuseir and Hamâh. This sect is thus rapidly increasing, while almost all the others are rapidly diminishing; and this is all the more remarkable as their homes are, with one or two exceptions, on the very outskirts of civilization, and they are forced to contend single-handed with the wild hordes of the desert.

The town of Hŭms cannot lay claim to such remote antiquity as some of those that surround it, such as

Hamâh, Riblah, and Sŭdŭd. It was probably founded, or at least first rose to fame and distinction, during the rule of the Seleucidæ. It is not mentioned in Scripture, but we find it referred to by Josephus and the earliest Roman geographers.[1] Its ancient name was EMESA, as it is written by Ptolemy,[2] who places it in the district of *Assamia*. Pliny calls it HEMESA;[3] but it was some time subsequent to the age of both these writers that the provincial town of Emesa came into notice among the great cities of the Roman empire. It had been for a number of years celebrated as containing a magnificent temple dedicated to the worship of the sun, and the office of chief priest in this sacred shrine was considered so important and honourable that the noblest families of Rome aspired to it. In A.D. 218, two youths held the office in concert, who only resigned it when elevated, the one to the throne of the Cæsars, and the other to the dignity of Augustus. These youths were Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, commonly called *Elagabalus*, and Marcus Aurelius Severus, afterwards known as the Emperor *Alexander Severus*.[4] A short time before this Emesa had been raised by the Emperor Caracalla, cousin of Elagabalus, to the rank of a Roman colony; but when the

[1] In Josephus's Antiquities, xix. 8, 1, we read of a certain Sampsigeramus king of *Emesa*, who visited Herod Agrippa at Tiberias. And in chap. xx. 7, we read that Agrippa gave his beautiful daughter *Drusilla* to Azizus king of Emesa. This is the same Drusilla who was afterwards taken from her husband by Felix, the Roman procurator of Judæa, and before whom Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" (Acts xxiv. 25). She afterwards met with a tragical end, having perished in an eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Ant. xx. 7, 2.

[2] Geog., v. 15, p. 97. [3] Hist. Nat., v. 26. [4] Dion. Cass.

latter attained to power he made his native city a metropolis, as may be seen from a comparison of coins.[5] Nearly half a century later Odenathus, the husband of the celebrated Zenobia, was murdered in this city a short time after his valour had won for him the proud name of Augustus; and only a few years afterwards the armies of Zenobia herself were overthrown on the neighbouring plain.[6] Longinus, the *sublime* philosopher, was a native of Emesa, and some suppose he was born here. It was while on a visit to this city that he first gained the acquaintance and friendship of Zenobia, who appointed him her instructor in the Greek language and literature.[7] This city afterwards became the capital of the province of Phœnicia of Libanus, and was for a time superior in rank to Damascus.[8] From a very early period it appears to have contained a large Christian population, and was the seat of a bishop down to the time of the Saracenic conquest of Syria.[9] When the Muslems invaded Syria, the wealth and strength of Emesa must have been very great: for, while they paid large sums for short periods of truce, they were able to defy the Saracens from behind their walls. It was by stratagem that the city was at last taken.[1] Hŭms, as the city was now called by the Saracens, felt the effects of the bloody wars that deluged Syria during the time of the crusades, and the subsequent invasions of the Tartars and contentions of the local princes and petty governors. It has always maintained,

[5] See Eckhel, vol. iii. p. 311.
[6] Vopiscus, Aurelian.
[7] Id. See also Suid., s. v. *Longinus*.
[8] Reland, Pal., p. 218.
[9] Id.; and S. Paulo, Geog. Sac., p. 294.
[1] Ockley's Hist. of Saracens, pp. 189-195.

however, a good degree of prosperity, and is still among the most active and bustling inland towns of this land.

It had been our intention to proceed from Hŭms to Sŭdŭd, but this district being constantly exposed to the incursions of plundering parties of Arabs cannot be traversed with safety at any time, except with a strong escort or in company of a caravan; and under present circumstances it would have been folly to attempt to go there alone. It so happened that no caravan left during our allotted time, and we were consequently obliged to return to Damascus by the direct route.

Tuesday, October 18th.—At 11·30 we left the gate of Hums, and proceeded along the great caravan-road southward. Near the city the plain is well cultivated; but after a few miles cultivated fields are only found in little groups, and soon afterwards the whole expanse is a wilderness. The road is among the best in Syria, and we passed over it at a rapid pace, for there was nothing to be seen and much to be feared. At 1·30 we had on our left the small village of Shinshâr, built within the walls of an old khan. The inhabitants can thus resist sudden incursions of plundering Arabs and guard their flocks from nightly depredations. At 2·7 we reached Shemsîn, another old caravanserai inhabited by a few families. The people came out around here with as much surprise in their faces as if we had descended from the clouds. That four solitary horsemen should travel along such an exposed road at such a time was more than they could comprehend. From this place I saw Hasya, S. 5° E., and Tell Neby Mindow, on the banks of the Orontes, N. 85° W. The castle el-Hŭsn was also

visible to the right of the latter. Along the whole eastern horizon the plain now spread out like a sea, without a hill, or mountain, or tree, or solitary ruin, to break the naked uniformity. After a pause of twelve minutes we again mounted, and at 2·50 had the first swell of Anti-libanus rising up out of the flat plain about two miles on our right. Here were some strange pits on the east side of the road, at the distance of a few yards, which are said to have been excavated by the Bedawîn as hiding-places in which to lie in wait for travellers and small caravans. We had been warned of the great danger we should be exposed to in travelling along this dreary and unguarded road, and we now saw how easily a band of desert marauders on their fleet mares could intercept and strip us. On crossing a gentle swell we observed a party of horsemen on the right near the base of the mountains, proceeding at a very fast pace. Almost immediately after we saw them they changed their course and struck eastward, as if to intercept us, but they were still so distant that we could neither tell their number nor their equipment. After a few minutes they disappeared in a little wady. Seeing an isolated tower on the side of the road in front, we now pressed on our horses to reach it, if possible, ere the party came up, that we might thus have a place in which to defend ourselves in case of attack. After an anxious half-hour we reached the brow of the wady into which the cavaliers had ridden, but we looked for them in vain. In a few minutes, however, I saw a single horseman considerably to the right, and away behind us; while, on a rising ground, far beyond, the others soon appeared, going up the mountain-side. This is a land

where every man fears his fellow. These were probably a party of peasants or peaceful village elders going to some place in the plain of Hŭms, but, seeing our little party in such a suspicious locality, they dreaded an attack, and, by a stratagem, escaped, as they supposed, imminent danger. We now crossed the wady and reached the little tower at four o'clock. Beside it is a large reservoir, at which is a stone with a long and beautiful Arabic inscription. From this place we looked through the singular pass in the mountain-range above referred to, toward the ancient Riblah. In 25 minutes more we entered Hasya, having thus ridden about 19 miles in 4 h. 42 m.

Hasya was originally one of the great khans along this route, and, when it became ruinous, huts were erected within its walls, and a few families of peasants found protection here while they cultivated a portion of the plain. A fine stream, collected by a subterranean canal, was formerly conducted to it from the eastward; but, as this rendered the village a favourite halting-place for government troops, the inhabitants destroyed the canal in order to be freed from the exactions and insolence of these licensed bandits! They now suffer severely from the scarcity of water, and yet they rejoice that their scheme was productive of the desired effect. This village is the residence of one of the border chiefs employed by government to protect the road, and keep the Bedawîn in check. Muhammed es-Suidân, the present *aga*, is a man of pleasing manners and considerable information, though deficient in that dignity which is generally found in these hereditary chieftains. He received us with great kind-

ness and hospitality, and showed an intense anxiety to obtain information about the various nations of Europe, their extent, population, and military force. We happened to have with us one of those admirable little compendiums of geography lately published at the Beyrout mission press, and we presented it to him. He appeared greatly pleased with the gift, and was surprised at the facility with which he could by means of the index obtain the desired information about the various nations and cities. He was appointed to his present station on the death of his uncle, Sâleh Aga, about two years and a half ago. The death of the latter was a fearful tragedy, though unfortunately such as are too often acted in this unhappy land. Some tribes of the Anezy had disputed with other Bedawîn from the north of Syria, and had collected a large force to war against them. Sâleh Aga proceeded to their encampment, with an escort of only thirty men, to endeavour to maintain peace. Owing to some imprudence on the part of his retinue, or some old feud between them and the Bedawîn, the latter surrounded them with a body of some twelve hundred horse, and fell with headlong fury on the devoted little band. A brief but feeble resistance was made. The aga was taken alive and hanged a few minutes afterwards; twelve of his guard were killed on the spot, and the remainder, without an exception, were left for dead on the plain. The Arabs then fled, and, assistance having come, the wounded men were conveyed to Hasya, where in the end most of them recovered. This event occurred about a week subsequent to my own capture by the Anezy near Palmyra, and the same men were the perpetrators of this foul deed.

The aga expressed his surprise that we had ventured to travel alone from Hŭms; and informed us that the road was now very unsafe. Two large tribes of the Wŭlid 'Aly had lately pitched their tents around the copious fountains of Kuryetein, and the 'Omûr were encamped in the northern defiles of Antilibanus. He said he had received private information that some parties of them intended to take advantage of the present unsettled state of public affairs, and intercept passengers and caravans on the road. On this account he would not permit us to proceed alone to Kâra, but proposed that we should join a caravan about to set out in a few hours. I did not much like this arrangement, but we thought it best to follow his advice.

Hasya is situated in the plain, about half an hour from the base of the main chain of Antilibanus, which here terminates in a point. The village of Sŭdŭd, the *Zedad* of the Bible, is nearly twelve miles distant south-east; but a swell in the plain hides it from view. From Sŭdŭd to Kuryetein is about eighteen miles farther in the same direction. The whole region northward of a line drawn from Riblah to Kuryetein is one vast plain as far as the eye can see; while that southward is intersected by long parallel ranges of mountains.

THE NORTHERN BORDER OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL.

As I have referred in these notes to several well-known ancient sites, and have also, I believe, laid them down on the map with a far nearer approach to accuracy than has hitherto been done, it may not be considered out of place

to introduce a few remarks about the northern border of the "Land of Promise," along which the ancient towns were situated. This border is defined in the books of Numbers and Ezekiel; but it will be admitted by all that these descriptions present difficulties which are not easily solved. I do not profess to have cleared away all these difficulties, nor is it my purpose here to enter into a long examination of the various theories that have been advanced. I propose to give in a few sentences the results of a careful examination of this section of country, accompanied with a rational and unprejudiced study of such passages of Scripture as tend to define the border-line.

The following are the descriptions of the northern border given in the Bible. It is thus defined by Moses: "This shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall point out for you Mount Hor: from Mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad: and the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazarenan."[2] The following is Ezekiel's description:—"And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon as men go to Zedad; Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazar-hatticon, which is by the coast of the Hauran. And the border from the sea shall be Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath."[3] And again, in giving the boundaries of Dan, he thus writes:—"From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one

[2] Num. xxiv. 8-10. [3] Ezek. xlvii. 15-17.

goeth to Hamath, Hazarenan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath, for these are his sides east and west, a portion for Dan."[4] The *Great Sea* is the starting-point, and the first inland mark is mount *Hor*, or the "Great Mountain." This of itself is indefinite, and the position of this mountain must be determined by other circumstances. This great mountain was to be connected with the "entrance of Hamath;" but this entrance of Hamath may be differently understood, according to the position of the writer: it may either mean the entrance from between the parallel chains of Libanus and Antilibanus from the south, or between the Libanus and the Nusairîyeh mountains from the west. It appears to me that the latter must be understood here, as the starting-point in the definition of the northern border is *from the sea;* and Ezekiel says, "the west side (of the land) shall be the great sea from the (southern) border, *till a man come over against Hamath.*"[5] That the pass alluded to is the natural entrance of Hamath from the Mediterranean, none who knows anything of the country will for a moment doubt. The "entrance of Hamath," mentioned in Numbers, I conceive to be identical with "the way of Hethlon" in Ezekiel. This way of Hethlon is said to be "as men go to Zedad," in one place; while in another it is said to be "as men go to Hamath." Both descriptions are correct; for the pass above referred to is the natural, and indeed the *only*, entrance to Zedad, the present Sŭdŭd, and to Hamath. This "way of Hethlon," however, must be regarded as defining the boundary of the land only through the pass to the borders of the plain.

[4] Ezek. xlviii. 1. [5] Id. xlvii. 20.

So far one follows the same course whether he journeys from the coast to Sŭdŭd or to Hamah. Now, having such data to guide us, we may conclude that the "Great Mountain" referred to is the northern and loftiest part of Libanus. The border, therefore, ran from the shore of the Mediterranean across the level tract on the coast toward the northern brow of this range, and then swept through the great pass to the border of the plain on the east.[6]

Having got thus far, we know from Ezekiel, as above quoted, that Hamath was included in the land, but whether the *city* or *territory*, is doubtful. It appears, from the mention of Ziphron, that the boundary-line must at least have gone near the city, as Ziphron has been identified with the modern village of Zifrûn near Hamâh.[7] The border would, therefore, run from the opening in the mountains north-east to Hamâh. The goings forth of the border are said to be to Zedad, and also to Hazar-enan; but this expression is very indefinite. It probably signified that both these places stood near the eastern outskirts of the territory. The site of the former is known; but where is the latter? We may infer, that, as it is given as a mark not only of the *northern* but of the *eastern* border,[8] it must have been eastward of Sŭdŭd; and

[6] This view is considerably strengthened by the words of Joshua when describing the country that still remained unoccupied by the Israelites in his day. He thus writes of the northern section of it:—"And the land of the *Giblites*, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under Mount Hermon unto the entering in of Hamath." The territory of the Giblites is, no doubt, identical with the present Jebeil, and, consequently, the whole ridge of Libanus is included, so that the "entering in of Hamath" must be the pass between the Libanus and Nusairîyeh mountains.

[7] Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. v. p. 685.

[8] Num. xxxiv. 10.

because it stood on the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath, as Ezekiel affirms, it must have been south of Sŭdŭd. The name signifies the "village of the fountains;" and though this name might seem sufficiently indefinite, it is not so in reality. There is, in fact, only one spot in this whole region that would seem to answer to the description, and that is *Kuryetein*, where there are large fountains. Between this place and the banks of the Orontes there is not a single fountain. The supply of water for the other villages near Sŭdŭd was obtained by subterranean canals and cisterns. *Kuryetein* is the dual of *Kurïeh*, which has the same signification as *Hazar*, "a village." If this identification can be relied upon, the border would come down from the neighbourhood of Hamath toward Kuryetein, thus including the fine plains of Hamâh and Hŭms.

Such then is my view of the northern border. But it appears that, while this border is identical in Numbers and Ezekiel, the *eastern border* is different in these two books. In Numbers it is thus described: "And ye shall point out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham, and the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall descend and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward."[9] Whereas in Ezekiel it is thus defined: "And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea."[1] Now a moment's consideration of these passages shows that Ezekiel extended the eastern border much farther

[9] Num. xxxiv. 10, 11. [1] Ezek. xlviii. 18.

than Moses. The latter brings it from Hazar-enan, which appears to have been at or near the north-eastern extremity of the land, to Riblah. We know nothing of Shepham, which was situated between these two places, but it lay probably to the south of Sŭdŭd. This line, therefore, according to the view above expounded, would sweep round, with a curve to the south, from Kuryetein to Riblah, and there turn southward along the western base of Antilibanus and Hermon, to the sea of Tiberias. The plain of Hŭms would thus be included, together with the Bukâ'a, *but the whole territory of Damascus left out.* In Ezekiel Damascus is *included*, with the country east of the Jordan.

At 8·50 P.M. our servants informed us that our horses were ready. Bidding adieu to our kind host, we mounted at once. We found that the aga had attached three of his horsemen to us as a body-guard, with instructions to keep by our sides till we entered Kâra, and not on any account to leave the caravan, which had already been gone for some time. Our road led up an easy slope, in a direction S. 5° E., the base of Antilibanus being about half an hour on our right. The moon was full, and shining gloriously in an unclouded sky. I was thus able to mark angles and time in my itinerary, with as much accuracy as during the day. The general features of the country were also clearly seen, and the only difficulty I experienced was in estimating the distances of the hills and mountains, and this information our guards were fully competent to give. In an hour we overtook the caravan.

It consisted of about seventy animals—camels, mules, and donkeys; accompanied by from thirty to forty men, mostly armed with muskets. A few mounted guards were likewise attached to it. At 10·20 we had on our right an old ruined tower; and here the ground became more broken and stony, with low white hills at intervals. We here also turned due south, and then S. by W.; and, after a dreary ride of nearly two hours over a rocky plain, reached Bureij at 12·10. We were now considerably in advance of the caravan, and our guards requested us to wait till it came up, as the most dangerous part of the route was still before us. We accordingly sat down on an old sarcophagus beside the gate of the village. Bureij was formerly a fortified khan, and within its strong walls and iron-plated gate the villagers rest secure.

In half an hour the caravan came up, and we again mounted. Almost immediately we entered a wady between low hills of white limestone. On leaving this we skirted the western side of a lofty conical peak, the commencement of a low ridge that runs away eastward toward Sŭdŭd. Our guards enlivened the dreariness of the ride by some exciting tales of border warfare, the scenes of which were laid in the plain that now opened up before us; and just at this spot an incident occurred which we for a few moments thought was about to afford us an example of such contests as our companions described. On ascending the eminence on the western slope of the hill we saw the dark outline of a large party in front. On account of the inequality of the ground, we were within gunshot ere we recognised them, and it

became at once apparent they were Bedawîn. The cry was suddenly raised in the caravan, "Arabs! Arabs!" and in a moment every gun was seized, and the sharp tick of the locks sounded ominously in our ears. We occupied the front rank, and our guards, with all the horsemen, were by our side. The advancing party was challenged, but returned no answer; ours came on at a quick pace. Again we cried, "Who comes?" and our guards presented their muskets, when fortunately at that moment a friendly answer was heard. They turned out to be a party of Bedawîn from the neighbourhood of Hŭms, returning from Damascus.

We were now on the borders of a little plain almost completely surrounded by hills. Close on our right was an irregular broken ascent leading to a plateau that here runs along the base of the great mountain-ridge. To the eastward is an opening through which the plain is drained. A group of little tells, with shelving gravelly sides, rises up in front of the line of road. Behind them is a verdant meadow with two little fountains bubbling up in its centre. This place is called 'Ayûn el-'Alak. There are no ruins near it, so far as I was able to ascertain, but on its southern side is a low ridge terminating to the left in a conical hill, on the summit of which stands a half-ruined tower. This spot is celebrated as a resort for robbers. Bands of Bedawîn come here mounted on their fleetest mares, and remain quietly seated round the fountain until their pickets give notice of the approach of a caravan. They then bear down upon their prey with the swiftness of eagles, and, except fire-arms are abundant, resistance is worse than useless. The booty is seized, the

horses' heads turned eastward, and these noble animals soon carry them far beyond the reach of pursuit. It sometimes happens, however, that a few well-directed shots turn the tide of battle. The Bedawîn never carry guns on these occasions; the spear is their only weapon; and where they meet with a determined little band, armed with muskets, they will rarely risk their own lives, or those of their justly prized horses, in a contest.

After a few minutes' delay at the fountain we again started, and, as there was nothing now to fear, we rode on at a quick pace, and reached Kâra in forty minutes. This is a large village with two spacious and well-built khans, now fast falling to ruin. The surrounding country is an undulating plain intersected by low irregular ridges of white hills; and with the exception of a few gardens by the side of the stream that flows past, the whole is bleak and uninteresting. Kâra is an ancient site, and contains some remains of antiquity built up in its modern houses and khans. It was the seat of a bishop in the early centuries of the Christian era. Its former name was KHARA, or, as it is generally written, COMOCHARA.[2]

We here dismissed our guards, and, accompanied by a single Kurdish horseman, who requested permission to join our party, we mounted, after half an hour's rest, and set out for Nebk. The road winds over undulating ground for the first hour and a half. In three-quarters of an hour we saw on our left on the summit of a low hill

[2] The identity I find asserted in the Arabic History of the Seven Gen. Councils, MS.; but the name and situation are of themselves sufficient to identify the site. In the Notitiæ Ecclesiasticæ it is written *Comoara, Chonachara, Konokora*, &c.; but the Greek is Χομοκαρα. See S. Paulo, Geog. Sac., p. 295, note 3, and Not. Ant., p. 62.

a ruined tower. These buildings seem to have been placed at intervals along this whole road, probably to serve as watch-towers. At this place we turned a little to the left, and passed through an opening in a ridge of hills, and after twenty minutes again resumed our former course across a fertile plain. The trees in the gardens of Deir 'Atîyeh were visible across the plain about a mile and a half on our left. As we rode along we were surprised and somewhat alarmed to hear repeated discharges of musketry in the direction of the last-named village. The night was far advanced, and we could not imagine any cause for such firing, except an encounter between the villagers and the Bedawîn. We spurred on our horses, but the volleys became nearer and more frequent and regular. Ere many minutes the sound of horses' feet was heard in the distance, and a dark figure approached. Before we had time to express surprise a cavalier advanced at gallop, and, reining up his steed directly in our path, demanded whence we came. Ere we could reply two others joined him; and we observed that they all held their arms ready for attack. Our first thought was that these were Bedawîn, who, having been driven off from Deir 'Atîyeh, were about to try their fortune upon us. We soon saw, however, by the fur caps and strange accent, that they were not Bedawîn; but our anxiety was not much lessened by this discovery. We did not fear the *result* of an attack, should they attempt it, for in numbers we had the advantage as well as in arms; but the Kurds, as we well knew, and some of us from *experience*, are reckless vagabonds; and it was far from being our wish to be forced to defend ourselves against them.

After a little talk our anxiety was relieved by hearing that they were the advance guard of a troop of irregular cavalry, despatched on a private mission by the commander-in-chief in Damascus. We soon after learned what this mission was, but I will only say here that in baseness and treachery it was quite characteristic of Turkish rule in Syria. Like the most of such schemes, however, it proved wholly fruitless. At six o'clock we reached the gate of Nebk. Having been in the saddle nearly all night and part of the preceding day, without sleep, and with little food, we felt somewhat exhausted. On reaching the sheikh's house we threw ourselves on the floor and were soon fast asleep.

October 19*th*.—After a few hours' rest and a hasty breakfast I went to the top of the little hill on the northern slope of which Nebk is built, to get a good view of the general features of the surrounding country. From this spot I was able to connect my former observations of the district further south with those made during the present tour, and thus to complete my survey of the main ridges of Antilibanus. As a full account of these observations is already before the public,[3] and as their results have been embodied in the map attached to this work, I do not consider it necessary here to insert them. From this place I saw Kustŭl, Yabrûd, and Deir 'Atîyeh, with the direction of the route thence to Sŭdŭd, along the base of a low mountain-range. The great change which has been made in this section of the map, and in the whole line of the great caravan-road from Hŭms to Damascus, will be apparent to every one. It will be observed that

[3] In the 'Bibliotheca Sacra' for July and October, 1854.

the main chain of Antilibanus has been removed much farther eastward than it appears on all former maps, and has also been extended *more than fifteen miles* farther into the plain of Hŭms. This range now terminates in long. 36° 50′ E., and lat. 34° 25′ N., instead of, as represented in former maps, long. 36° 20′ and lat. 34° 10′; thus a correction is made of *half a degree* in longitude and *a quarter of a degree* in latitude. The relative positions of Damascus, Bâalbek, and Hŭms are also totally changed.

At 1·25 we again mounted our horses, and, passing the fine khan, rode for some distance along the banks of a little stream brought by an aqueduct from the plain near Yabrûd. On our left was a long line of barren chalky hills, a spur from the Mâlûla range, which strikes out half an hour south of Yabrûd. After winding through extensive vineyards and fields of madder, we reached Yabrûd at 2·52. Our route hence to Mâlûla was the same I travelled on a preceding tour. We rested for a few minutes at the same fountain in the wild glen, and got some grapes from the same kind *natûr*. The sun had set, and the short twilight of this eastern land had given place to the gloom of night, when we knocked at the convent-gate of Mâlûla. On the very same day, and about the same hour, we knocked here twelve months before. We were admitted by the same deacon and welcomed by the same jolly old monk. The same servants accompanied us, and we rode the same horses. Mr. Robson alone was wanting, but he was separated from us by broad seas and broader lands.

October 20th.—We left Mâlûla at 9 o'clock, and rode down the vale through beautiful gardens and orchards.

After passing a grove of very ancient pistachio-trees we reached the village of 'Ain et-Tîneh at 9·32. We here turned a little to the right, and, ascending the bank of the wady, followed a straight course diagonally across the plain to the foot of the mountain-range that separates it from the plain of Kuteifeh. On reaching the base of the mountains we turned to the right, and rode along them to their southern termination, which we reached at 10·50. We now swept round their base, and, passing over the undulating ground between the plains of Jerûd and Saidnâya, came to a little village called Hîleh, of which we had never before heard. After a pause of five minutes to take bearings, we crossed a low white ridge and entered a fertile plain. Turning to the right, we rode across it, and then over some swelling white hills to Hafîr, a fine village beautifully situated in a little valley whose sides are lined with the richest foliage. From hence we continued over hilly ground and through a vale filled with vineyards until we came to the Menîn range, which we surmounted at 1 o'clock, and immediately descended into the Sahra near the base of Jebel Tinîyeh. We passed the little village of Hafeiyer, with a fine fountain, at 1·40, and half an hour afterwards entered a wild pass in the lowest ridge of Antilibanus, through which we wound till we emerged on the plain of Damascus. We now continued our route by the large fountain of Kuseir to Dûma, and thence along the great caravan-road to Damascus, which we reached at 6 o'clock.

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